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I ASK NOT TOO MUCH.

BY BARONESS SWIFT.

Oh! ask thou not too much of love,
Which, like the heartsease, often grows
On barren rocks our sight to cheer,
And bring us gladness 'mid our woes!

Ask thou of friendship not too much,
For, as the nightingale doth sing
In summer-time, when winter comes
It, too, alas! oft taketh wing!

And ask thou not too much of life,
Which from its source flows clear and free,
E'en as the streamlet, yet whose waves
Rush turbid to eternity!

A PERILOUS GAME;

—OR,—

Her Mad Revenge.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STRANGERS STILL," "PRINCE AND PEASANT," "THE LIGHTS OF ROCKBY," "A WOMAN'S SIN," ETC.

CHAPTER VII.—[CONTINUED.]

FLORIS danced one or two dances with strangers, then Bertie came up.

"I didn't like to seem too pressing, Miss Carlisle," he said, his blue eyes fixed on her wistfully, "but I hope you have saved me a waltz."

"Would you like to have this one?" said Floris.

His handsome face beamed.

"Really? How fortunate!" and he put his arm round her.

If there was one thing Bertie did better than another it was waltzing.

Dancing was with him indeed the poetry of motion.

Floris and he were nicely matched and made a splendid picture of youth and comeliness.

By the time they had taken a turn round the room, Bertie's heart was beating fast, and the blood coursing through the veins with the ecstatic delight of having her in his arms.

The band seemed to be a heavenly choir; he moved on clouds through joyous space; he was half intoxicated with passionate love and despairful longing.

"Shall we go on? Am I tiring you?" he asked presently, in an almost tremulous whisper.

"Oh, don't stop, please!" said Floris, all unconscious of the storm within his breast, of the mad longing that possessed him to whisper—

"I love you! Floris, I love you!"

"Have I got your step?" he asked, for the sake of saying something, for he knew that they were moving in perfect accord, like one person instead of two.

"Perfectly," she said. "How can you ask? It is a delicious waltz. One of Waldteufel's isn't it?"

"Yes—I don't know," replied poor Bertie, wondering how she could talk thus easily and carelessly.

It came to an end at last, all too soon for him, and he stood, as the music died away, panting a little and very pale. He was thinking how he should be able to bear seeing her dancing with other men for the rest of the evening, after the few delicious moments that had passed. He would go away, go home and shut himself up and think of her.

Floris's voice roused him from his abstraction.

"Will you take me to see those palms, Lord Clifforde?" she said. "I have been longing to stand underneath them all day. How calm and solitary they look out there in the dimness. One can almost fancy that they have the scent of the desert in their leaves still?"

Bertie got her cloak, and they made their way into the conservatory. Two or three people were standing about, but Bertie found a seat in a quiet nook underneath the palms, a nook shut out from the gay ball-room beyond, and almost hidden amidst the huge fronds of a royal fern.

"This is delicious!" said Floris, leaning back and pulling the leaves softly across her hand. "If I were rich, I would have a very large conservatory, with nothing but palms and ferns in it, with just a trickling fountain or two, but no birds to disturb the solemn quiet: and I would not permit anyone to speak above a whisper!" and she laughed softly.

Bertie stood beside her, his blue eyes resting on her downcast face, with a passionate longing aching in them.

"If you were rich," he said, scarcely above the whisper she had almost commanded. "Perhaps you will be some day."

She shook her head smiling.

"I don't know that I care to be," she said, as if communing with herself. "Rich people seem to have a great deal of care and trouble, and are no happier than poor people. I suppose Sir Edward is very rich?"

"Yes," said Bertie. "Immensely so!"

"And he works as hard as a City clerk, or harder, I suppose, and is always tired and worried to death. What a puzzle life is!" and she sighed.

He drew a little nearer, the quiet of the place, her sweet voice were driving him to rashness.

"There is only one thing worth having in life," he said.

"What is that?" she asked, looking up with a smile, which died away as she saw the paleness of his face, and the light in his eyes.

"Can you not guess?" he said, half-fearfully, and yet with intense earnestness. "Miss Carlisle, I know that you will think me mad. I expect that you will be offended and angry. But I must speak, even though by speaking I anger you past forgiveness."

Floris half rose, but sank back again, and opened her lips, as if about to stop him; she did pronounce his name, but almost inaudibly.

It is a strange, mysterious sensation which a girl experiences the first time a man tells her that he loves her, and the quiet, hurried words had thrown a spell over her for the moment, rendering her powerless to move.

"Miss Carlisle!—Floris!—I love you!" he said, bending over her; his face white, his lips tremulous.

A swift tide of crimson flooded Floris's face and neck, then she too turned pale.

"Yes, I love you," he repeated. "I don't dare to ask you if—if you love me! I know that it is not possible. I know that I must seem like a stranger to you. But though you may have known me only a few days, I seem to have known and loved you for years. Floris, have pity on me! I love you with all my heart and soul——"

"No, no, Lord Clifforde——" she faltered at last.

"Yes, it is true. I know what you think! That I am light and frivolous—that—that—I am only one of the butterflies in the world, of no use or value; but, Floris, if you will let me love you, if you will love me a little in return; if you will only try to love me, I will prove to you that I will be less unworthy of you——"

"Oh, hush!" she said, trembling, a great wave of tenderness and pity sweeping over her heart for the handsome, true-hearted boy. "Don't say any more, Lord Clifforde. You—you—mistake! It is I who would be unworthy of you."

"Floris!" reproachfully, passionately.

"Yes, yes! Who am I that you should so humble yourself? Oh, do not say any more! I am sorry—very, very sorry!"

"Then—then—" he faltered, looking down at her.

"Indeed I am very sorry!" she repeated; "but I did not know, indeed I did not!"

"No, or you would have treated me coldly and kept me away!" he said sorrowfully.

Then with a wild hope that was almost despair, he took her hand in his hot one and pressed it fiercely.

"Floris, is it, must it be 'No?' Will you not give me some little hope? I will be patient! I will not plague! You shall see how patient I can be——"

"Oh, hush! hush!" she said. "Do not say another word, Lord Clifforde. It must be 'No!' I—I cannot love you. I am very, very grateful for the honor you have done me, and I know how great an honor it is! I wish—yes, I will say it!—I wish that I could have answered differently, but I cannot."

She let her hand rest in his while she spoke, then she drew it gently away.

He let it go, slowly, reluctantly, and his lips parted with a long sigh, as if something had gone from his life; then with a brave effort he forced a smile.

"You have been very good to me, Miss Carlisle," he said, and his voice rang with the pain that tortured him. "You have been more patient than I deserve. I will say 'Good-bye,' now."

Floris looked up at him: her eyes were moist.

"There shall be no word of 'goodness' or 'patience' between us, Lord Clifforde," she said, "and if we cannot—if I cannot be to you all that you wish, at least we can be friends still."

Poor Bertie smiled sadly and shook his head.

"How little you understand!" he murmured. "I know what you think, Miss Carlisle. You have heard, you know, that I do not bear the highest character for wisdom, and you think that because my past has been frivolous and foolish, that I shall get over this and forget it. Ah, you do not understand how deeply I love you! All my life will be changed from this hour."

"Oh, Lord Clifforde!"

"Yes, Floris; I shall not get over this so easily; I shall not try to forget it. If I cannot have your love, I can at least endeavor to be less unworthy of it. You ask me to remain your friend? Floris, all my life I shall think tenderly of you, and of myself as your lover. Do you think I could bear to see you day after day, knowing that there can be no hope for me; that I could endure to meet you as an ordinary friend when all the time my heart was burning in the desire to make you my wife! No! I must go away. Good-bye. Some day—who knows—I may be able to meet you without the pang of misery and disappointment which I feel now. Good-bye."

His voice, the boyish voice which only this morning had rang out merrily, the musical voice which to Floris's ears had always something of laughter in it, was very grave and sad, and his eyes resting on her face were full of a great despair.

She put out her hand in silence, feeling that any word from her would be worse than useless.

He took her hand, held it for a moment, then raised it towards his lips.

"May I?" he asked simply, too noble and chivalrous to snatch a kiss by stealth.

She did not speak, but her eyes, in which the tears were standing, answered for her.

Poor Bertie kissed her hand twice, then turned and hurried away.

* * * * * * *

Floris sat under the stately palms sad and troubled.

No girl who is worth anything refuses an offer from an honorable man without being sad and sorrowful, especially if she really likes the man, and only just stops short of loving him; and Floris really did like Bertie.

His merry, boyish laugh, his frank brotherly way had been very pleasant to her; she only just discovered how pleasant now that she had lost them—perhaps for ever.

Another girl might also have remembered and regretted that she had refused a viscount; but Floris gave no thought to Bertie's rank.

It was of himself she thought, as she sat with downcast face, and hands listlessly in her lap.

Why had she sent him away? Why had she not tried to love him? At any rate, why had she not asked for time?

She asked herself these questions, and did not dare to answer them.

There are times when we shrink from examining our own hearts, lest we should discover the truth, and Floris shrank from examining hers, lest she should find an answer within there which would fill her with shame and confusion.

With a sigh she rose, then suddenly remembering that she was alone, and that she could not very well enter the the ball-room unattended, she resumed her seat, quite contented to remain in the quiet and cool for a time.

Presently the band, which had been playing a square dance, ceased, and the couples began to find their way into the conservatory.

Unwillingly to be discovered, Floris rose and retreated still further into the dim region of palms and ferns, and found another seat still more secluded than the last. It was so far removed from the ball-room, that but for the sound of voices, and reflection of the lights on the fountains, she might have fancied herself in the recesses of some tropical forest.

While she was sitting there, a gardener passed by, and half startled by the apparition of a beautiful lady in a white dress, touched his hat respectfully and apologetically, and turned off through a door partly concealed by creeping plants.

Floris was just thinking that if she chose she might remain undiscovered till the ball broke up, when she heard the rustle of a woman's dress, and a man's voice close behind her.

At the sound of the voice Floris started. Although it had only uttered one word she recognized it.

It was Lord Norman's! She looked round anxiously, and saw, through the fern leaves, Lord Norman and Lady Blanche sauntering down the narrow path.

Lady Blanche was magnificently dressed in an Indian silk of the thinnest fibre, and of the palest pink.

It was studded with pearls in the Oriental fashion, and fitted her to perfection. Nestling in her golden hair were flowerets of diamonds, that sparkled and gleamed like fireflies in the fitful light.

The beautiful face, usually so cold and impassive, wore a faint, soft smile, that played about the perfect lips and shone in the velvety eyes.

As they approached, Floris saw that she had clasped Lord Norman's arm, on which she leant with her other hand, and that her face was turned up to his with a happy childlike smile.

Then Floris looked at him. Surely there would be an answering smile on his face? No man could resist the entreaty in those dark, velvety eyes!

But there was no responsive happiness

on his face; grave, almost grim, it seemed by contrast with hers, and Floris saw that, though he was presumably listening to her, his attention was straying, and that he was thinking of something else than the beautiful woman clinging so lovingly, so appealingly, to his arm.

"I am so glad you have come, Bruce!" Floris heard her murmur. "You said you did not intend to, and I was looking forward to a blank evening."

"I changed my mind," he said, if not coldly, carelessly.

"That is a woman's privilege, and one they do not extend to men, Bruce," she retorted, with a smile that seemed significant to Floris.

"Oh, men have all your weaknesses as well as their own, Blanche," he said.

Floris looked round for some means of escape.

To be found by them, playing, as it would seem, at eavesdropping! The idea was terrible! But there was no exit save by a narrow path in which they stood, and hoping that they would turn back, Floris drew still closer into her leafy shelter and tried not to listen.

"Shall we sit down, Bruce?" asked Lady Blanche. Floris's heart quaked.

"If you like," he assented. "But hadn't we better go back and dance this waltz? You won't care about missing it, you know."

"I don't mind in the least," she said. "If you would rather sit it out, let us do so. We can find a seat."

"The only legitimate excuse for a ball is dancing," he said. "We will go back."

Floris drew a breath of relief.

"Wait a moment or two, Bruce," said Lady Blanche. "I have something to tell you."

"Yes," he said, with a politeness that was worse than the most pointed indifference, and he looked down at her patiently.

Lady Blanche hung her head and pulled at the pearls on her fan.

"I don't know how to tell you, Bruce! And yet I must. You seem the only friend, the only one to whom I can come when I am in trouble. It seems so natural to think of you as a friend and adviser, Bruce!" and she glanced up at him with a soft lingering sigh.

Floris, trying not to listen, heard every word, saw the upward glance, heard the tender, pleading little sigh, and appreciated them as only a woman could.

Surely not even Lord Norman could withstand them!

He was silent a moment, during which Floris, with an aching at her heart, expected to see him put his arm round the slim waist and draw the beautiful woman to him with murmured words of endearment! But instead, he said with a half smile—

"What have you been doing, Blanche? Overdrawing your account? Laming my lord's favorite mare? Or what?"

"Ah, if it were only a little trouble like that, Bruce, I could laugh at it as easily as you do——"

"I wasn't laughing, Blanche."

"But—but this is a greater one, Bruce, I find it hard to tell you——"

"Don't then; tell me to-morrow," he said, gravely, and almost, so Floris fancied, with an air of relief.

Lady Blanche sighed.

"No, I must tell you now, Bruce! To-morrow may be too late!" and she glanced up at him piteously. "Bruce, Lord Hawksley called this afternoon. I was out, here, at the Fair, but he came to dinner and—he came to see me!"

Her voice sank, and her hand closed nervously on his arm.

"Did he?" he remarked carelessly. "What did the old antediluvian want?"

"Bruce!" in a low, thrilling tone. "He came to ask me to be his wife."

Lord Norman did not start, but he looked surprised and indignant.

"He did!"

Then he laughed, and at the laugh Lady Blanche's face went deathly white as if he had struck her.

"Forgive me, Blanche. But Hawksley! Why, great heavens, he is as old as Methuselah! Why he was an old man when I was a boy! He must be eighty—more!"

"And you laugh!" murmured Lady Blanche between her closed lips.

"I beg your pardon! But could you help it? Hawksley! Why he has more than one leg in the grave, and is as false as one of the models at Madame Tussaud's! His wig and teeth and enamelled complexion used to be the joke when I first came to town! And he proposed to you! Of course you gave him a speedy answer, Blanche?"

She opened her fan and looked at it.

"No, Bruce. I—Lord Hawksley is an old friend of my father's."

"He might have been of your grandfather's," retorted Lord Norman.

"And—and——"

"He is the richest and best part in London. I know all that, Blanche, but all the same, I don't suppose you said anything but 'No.'"

She was silent.

Floris could see that she was trying him; anyone but a man would have understood the trap she was setting for him, but Lord Norman was a man and altogether unconscious.

Floris's heart beat fast. How would it end? Would the beautiful siren, with her pitiful tale, win the day?

"No, Bruce," she faltered. "Oh, don't be angry with me! You don't understand how we women are placed!"

"No, I don't," he retorted. "But I do understand that when a girl is asked by a man who is old enough to be her grandfather, to be his wife, that the sooner she sends him about his business the better."

"Ah, it is so easy for you to say that!" she murmured. "You are a man, and your own master! You can pick and choose where you will! But I am a woman, Bruce, and am not my own mistress. Bruce, my father really wishes me to marry!"

"But not Lord Hawksley?" he said.

She glanced up at him, and opened and shut her fan again.

"He is anxious that I should marry, Bruce, and Lord Hawksley is an old friend of his! And—and—there is no one else."

Now, thought Floris, he will take her in his arms and tell her that there is someone else, that there is Lord Norman!

But Lord Norman did nothing of the kind.

"That's nonsense, Blanche! There are a dozen someone elses! I could count up a dozen men who are head over heels, dying in love, and any one of whom would go half out of his mind with delight if you threw the handkerchief to them!"

She crimsoned, then turned pale.

"But—but Bruce! I don't care for any one of them," she murmured.

"And certainly you don't care for old Hawksley!" he said quickly. "So why choose him?"

"He is my father's choice, not mine!" she said turning her head away.

He stood silent and troubled. Should he hold out his hand and say—

"Blanche, here am I! Will you choose me?"

Why should he not? A few months—a few weeks—ago he was quite ready; was on the verge of doing so.

Why should he not now? She was supremely beautiful, of high rank—his equal—a peerless creature fit to adorn a Court!

Great heavens, what more, or higher, did he need to expect?

He asked himself the question, half angrily—impatient with himself—inwardly raging at his want of firmness, at his incapability of forcing himself to do it.

Then, suppressing his angry air, he did turn to her and say—

"Blanche——"

But before he could get any further, before the glad, expectant light had scarcely time to come to her eyes, a voice—a clear thin voice, the unmistakable treble of Lady Betty—chimed in between them.

"Floris! Floris, my dear; where are you?"

As if the name "Floris" had fallen from the lips of his guardian angel, Lord Norman stopped short, and, with a sudden start, turned towards her.

Floris saw him start, saw him turn pale. Was he angry with Lady Betty for interrupting them?

And what on earth should she, Floris, do? She could not possibly come out now! Inwardly chafing at her situation, she had borne it as best she could, and she must bear it a little longer.

"Oh, Bruce! Here you are! How do you do my dear Blanche?"

The two women shook hands coldly, and if a glance from one woman's eyes could kill another, then Lady Blanche's would have slain Lady Betty on the spot.

"So provoking!" said Lady Betty. "I've lost Miss Carlisle! I've been looking for her everywhere. Of course it doesn't matter—I mean I don't suppose she has disappeared for good, but all the men she has promised dances to are bothering me about her."

"I didn't know Miss Carlisle was here," said Lord Norman, and his voice seemed suddenly lightened.

Lady Blanche leant upon his arm, with a silent, haughtily pre-occupied air, as if the absolute murder of Miss Carlisle could not affect her.

"Oh, yes, she is here; and has made quite a success!" said Lady Betty, glancing with pretty sp'tefulness at Lady Blanche. "That is just it! Another girl would not be missed, but the men are plaguing my life out, and I must find her."

"She cannot be far off," he said, looking round.

Floris drew still closer under her fern ambush.

"Where did you see her last, Betty?"

"She was dancing with Bertie, and I think they walked off in this direction. Good gracious! I never thought of that! You know how dreadfully reckless Bertie is! Do you think he can have persuaded her to—to go off with him anywhere?"

"Nonsense!" said Lord Bruce, almost fiercely. "Where can they go?"

"I don't know," replied Lady Betty, with characteristic vagueness. "He has certainly disappeared also!"

Lord Norman's face darkened.

"I think I should like to go into the room again, Bruce: this place strikes rather chilly, does it not?" murmured Lady Blanche with haughty languor.

He started.

"Eh? Oh, yes! Certainly. Look in the ante-rooms, Betty," he said, over his shoulder, as he led Lady Blanche away.

They had no sooner got clear away than Floris stepped from her nook so suddenly as to make Lady Betty jump.

"Good gracious, my dear! You nearly frightened me out of my life! In your white dress you looked like a ghost!"

"I might say like the burglar who was discovered underneath the bed by the lady; 'I don't see why I should frighten you, seeing that you have been looking for me so long!'" said Floris, with a very quiet smile.

Lady Betty laughed.

"Now that is just like you! Instead of apologising for all the trouble you have given me, you make me laugh!"

"I am very sorry," said Floris.

"So you might be, my dear. But what are you doing here? And where is Bertie?"

"I was resting," said Floris; "and it was so quiet and cool that I remained longer than I expected."

"And Bertie—he was with you, wasn't he?" asked Lady Betty.

"Yes, but Lord Clifforde left me some time ago," said Floris, struggling hard to keep the color from her face.

Lady Betty looked at her rather curiously.

"Ah, well, come back now, dear, will you? The men you have promised are going about in the most wretched state of mind——"

"I don't think I will dance again to-night Lady Pendleton," said Floris, quietly. "I have rather a headache, and I would like to stay here——"

"But, gracious me, one doesn't come to a ball to sit in a conservatory!" exclaimed Lady Betty, remonstratingly.

"I have danced a great deal to-night. Please let me stay!" she pleaded, feeling that she would do anything rather than whirl round the garish room after all that had happened between poor Bertie and her.

"Oh, very well, my dear. Well, stay here for half-an-hour, and then I'll come for you. You do look pale and tired, and it has been a hard day. It is beautifully quiet here, certainly. I'll come back in half-an-hour."

"Thank you," said Floris, gratefully, and she went back to her secluded corner.

There she sat for some moments, wondering whether Lady Blanche had gained her victory, or whether Lord Norman had not yet said the words which would make him hers.

And why, she asked herself angrily, should she trouble herself about Lord Norman and Lady Blanche!

What could it possibly matter to her whether Lady Blanche won or lost him! With an impatient gesture she picked up her fan, resolved to go back into the ball-room and waltz Lord Norman out of her thoughts, when suddenly she heard his step—she knew it so well already!—close beside her, and the next moment he put aside the fern leaves and was looking down at her.

There was a look of glad surprise in his face, a flash of light in his eyes, as they rested on hers, that went straight to Floris's heart, so that, instead of looking up at him with cold, haughty indifference, her eyes drooped with a strange heaviness, and flinched before him.

"At last!" he said, in a low voice. "Where have you been hiding? or rather, seeing that you are here, why have you been hiding, Miss Carlisle?"

"I have not been hiding," she answered, trying to speak coldly. "I have been resting here."

"I have been looking for you all over the place," he said, the happy lightness of his voice contrasting strangely with the grimness of a few minutes ago.

"I am sorry. I will go back now," she said, rising.

"Oh! but is that fair?" he said, expostulatingly. "Just as I have found you, and in such a delicious little nook, you want to leave it. Please forget that though you are rested, I am not. You don't know how many miles I have walked in search of you!"

As he spoke, she felt rather than saw the dark eyes traveling over her; felt rather than saw the intense admiration he bestowed upon her.

"There is no reason why you should not remain, Lord Norman," she said, gathering up the tail of her dress; "I can find my way back alone."

"You shall not do that!" he said, with a sigh; "if you will go. But, will you not stay five—only five minutes longer? You looked quite contented, and as if you meant growing here, until I came up. I am afraid I disturbed you. Perhaps I had better go!" and he let the ferns fall from his hand.

Floris did not speak.

"Then I may stay?" he said, and taking her silence as an affirmative, he sat down on a clump of rustic work at her elbow, and looked down at her.

Floris's heart beat fast. She racked her brain for some commonplace remark to hide her confusion, and to make him think that his presence was of no consequence to her; but she could find nothing—nothing!—to say.

He was silent for some minutes, then he looked round.

"What a delightful retreat you have discovered," he said slowly. "No wonder you were reluctant to leave it! And yet you have made a 'success,' as Lady Betty would say. Do you know that your absence is causing quite a commotion amongst the dancing men?"

Floris smiled.

"They can easily be consoled, my lord," she said. "But you remind me of my broken engagements; I will go and save some of them."

"Not yet," he said, curtly. "My five minutes are not up yet. But I will release you, if you give me the next dance!"

"My card is full," she said firmly.

"Then I will take the remainder of my time," he retorted.

There was silence for a moment, then, looking down on the ground, he said—

"I am glad that I have found you here; it gives me an opportunity of saying 'good-bye!'"

Floris started and looked up at him with a sudden glance of alarm; but he was staring moodily at the floor and did not even see it.

"Yes, my lord?" she said, steeling herself to speak coldly.

"Yes, 'my lady,'" he responded, mocking her cold formality. "Yes, I am off to-morrow. I promised you that I would stay over this Fair, and I have done so——"

"You promised Lady Pendleton," said Floris, quietly.

He kicked at a broken leaf impatiently.

"I promised you; I stayed because you asked me," he said emphatically; "and you know it."

Floris trembling picked up her fan.

He looked at his watch.

"I have just got two minutes more, if you please!" he said significantly.

"Are you going to be away long?" asked Floris, for the sake of saying something, and speaking as very indifferently as she could.

"I don't know. I daresay. Two or three years, perhaps!" gloomily.

Floris did not speak.

"Why should I come back?" he went on. "I am tired of London life—for the matter of that, I am tired of life altogether. It seems to me that the clever individual who wrote the book called 'Is life worth living?' might have saved himself the trouble, seeing that everybody knows the answer! Life is only worth living when one can get what one wants, and as one never gets the one thing that one wants above all others, why the game is not worth the candle!"

"And yet you have so much," murmured Floris.

"Oh, yes, I know!" he said, bitterly. "I know what you would say; I am a peer of the realm; I am rich—thanks to a fluke of the law, which has enriched me at the expense of others."

Floris colored, and turned her head aside.

"I have heaps of friends; am my own master; and the rest of it! And yet I question whether there is a more miserable man in London than I am to-night, for I have set my heart upon a thing, and I cannot get it."

"I think the five minutes are up, my lord," said Floris.

He took no notice of her reminder, but sat, staring, at the ground.

"So, Miss Carlisle, I will say good-bye. May I say that I hope I go carrying your good wishes with me? Don't speak for a minute, please!" as Floris was framing a commonplace on her lips. "I know that—that you dislike me! No, I will not say that! You are too good and gentle to dislike anyone! I will not say dislike! But I cannot but feel that my presence is distasteful to you. How can it be otherwise, seeing that it reminds you of all you and yours have lost. Heaven knows that if you would accept it I would restore it all to you—every penny!"

"My lord!" coldly, proudly, and yet with a tremor in her voice she tried hard to conceal.

"There! I beg your pardon! I know—I say I know it is not possible! Do you think I have not learned for myself how proud you are, even if you had not told me in so many written words!" and he touched his breast. "Yes, I keep your note still, to make me miserable when I am far away!" and he laughed bitterly.

Floris drew her cloak round her, and turned her head from him.

"I shall often look at that note, Miss Carlisle. It will serve to remind me that life is not worth living. But, I beg your pardon, I am keeping you."

He got up, then, before she could move, he sat down again.

"Will you not say that you wish me well, Miss Carlisle?"

Floris opened her lips, but for a moment no sound came, then, at last, she murmured very softly—

"Yes! I wish you every happiness, my lord!"

"Thank you!" he replied. "But if it is any consolation to you, let me assure you that your wish is quite in vain. I am not happy, and I shall not be. Shall I tell you why?"

Floris was silent, and he did not speak for a minute.

"Yes, I will tell you!" he said, as if he had been debating in his mind whether he should do so or not. "Miss Carlisle, I am going to make you very angry. It is probable that when I have spoken, you will forbid me ever to speak to you again. I am a fool to speak! All day I have been telling myself that it would be better for me to take myself off in silence, but I cannot. I am like the man who stole a fox, and who concealed it under his vest, and was silent until the last moment. This is my last moment, and I must speak, though the words separate us for ever."

He was silent while one could count ten, and Floris plucked up courage to smile quietly.

"Had you not better conceal your fox a little longer, my lord?"

"No!" he said. "This is what I have to say: Miss Carlisle, I love you!"

As he spoke the momentous words, not falteringly, as did poor Bertie, but with a grim intensity, with brows knit, and lips set firmly, Floris's heart seemed to stop beating, then gave a great leap of wild joy, of ecstatic triumph, of sublime satisfaction of one who has been long athirst, and feels the cup of life-saving water at her lips.

"I love you!" he said.

A deep crimson spread over Floris's face and neck, and her eyes sank, heavily weighted, while her hands closed on her fan with a spasmodic grasp; but she said no word.

She could not; if she had tried to speak, her lips would only have echoed that grim emphatic avowal—

"I love you!"

"You are angry!" he said, in a very low

voice. "I expected it. You think I have no right to tell you this after the unmistakable signs of aversion you have bestowed on me. I know it. I plead guilty. But I cannot help it. This is the last time we shall meet—you will be glad I know. We have never met yet but I have offended you, and you have found it necessary to—yes, snub me! But this is the very last time and—and—will you forgive me?"

She did not speak; she could not. He stooped and took up his opera hat, and looked from it to her as if hesitating whether to go or wait for a word.

"Will you not speak to me?" he said, gravely.

Still she was silent.

Then, as if his passion goaded him beyond prudence, he bent over her and laid his hand upon her arm, his strong fingers burning hot and seeming to brand her with their own passion.

"Floris! Have some pity! Speak to me kindly! One kind word! Your icy looks and proud words have cut me to the heart often enough, Heaven knows. Don't hurt me with them now, now that we are going to part!

"Floris, I love you! I even loved you—think of it!—before I saw you. Even before we met your pride and scorn whipped and tortured me! Unbend a little now, Floris. Send me away—as I know you will but send me away with one kind word! Say 'Bruce, I do not like you; I have cause not to like you—or yours. Your name is hateful to me, and I am glad that you are going; but I am sorry that you love me, and—and if you had been another man—if you had borne another name, I might have loved you!'

"Will you say something like that, Floris? Don't let me take away with me for a last remembrance, to haunt me for months, a proud, angry face, a scornful retort. I love you, Floris. I shall love you, I am afraid, for a long time! Tell me that you are sorry for me, at least!"

Still she was silent, her averted face white and constrained; her pride doing battle with her love, and losing ground inch by inch.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Before Heaven," he said, "I do not think there was ever a prouder woman or a better hater. Good-bye, Floris. I wish that I could hate you as you evidently hate me!"

He turned as he spoke, then hesitated, went back, and took up the edge of her cloak, still warm from contact with her soft white arm.

"Good-bye," he said, and he bent and pressed the cloak to his lips, not reverently and fearfully as poor Bertie bestowed his caress, but with a fierce, passionate wistfulness. "Good-bye, my Lady Pride."

As he bent, even as his lips touched the soft swansdown, her hand went out, not swiftly, but hesitatingly, reluctantly, towards him.

He stopped, with fond, eager, hungry eyes.

"Well" he said, almost hoarsely.

"I am sorry," she said, using the very words she had used to poor Bertie, but how differently. Ah, how differently!

"Thanks," quietly.

"And—and—I wish you——" she stopped her face quivering, her lips trembling, her eyes shrinking piteously before his passionately-questioning gaze.

"You wish me every happiness? Thank you again," he said, with a sharp sigh. "And you forgive me? Is that what you are trying to say, and find it so hard? Thank you, still once more. Half a loaf is better than nothing. We part friends. Give me your hand, Floris; your left hand that's nearest your heart."

She put out her hand and he took it and held it so tightly that it tingled with pain—pain that was an ecstacy to her; pain that she would not have exchanged for the greatest ease.

"There!" he said, "I am satisfied. Good-bye!" and his fingers unclosed.

But hers did not! Trembling, quiveringly, they wound round his hand, and held it feebly as a child's, and yet as strong as a giant's.

He did not start; he uttered no wild exclamation of joy, or surprise, or delight, but he stood as if he had been shot, or turned to stone, looking at her averted face, now crimson with shame, as if he were dreaming.

Then he flung himself at her feet, and grasped her other hand, and drew her to him, looking up into her face with passionate eyes that swear to wrest the truth from her.

"Floris! What is this? What do you mean? For Heaven's sake don't—don't play with me. Floris! You hold my hand! You do not speak!—you do not send me away from you. Great heavens, am I mad, or dreaming, or do you!—Floris, do you love me?"

She turned her head, and looked down at him with the truth shining in the glorious eyes that were now soft and tremulous with love, aye, with passion, answering to his own.

With a low cry he kissed her hands, quickly, fiercely; but he was not satisfied yet.

"My darling! Floris! Speak to me! Tell me! I can't believe it until I hear your lips whisper it! Floris!"—with a swift, awful doubt—"you are not playing with me!"

A sudden expression of pain crimsoned her face.

"No! I see you are not! Forgive me, darling, but the joy is so sudden, so unexpected! Floris, tell me! Say, 'Bruce, I do love you!'"

She bent her head, and looked at him, and whispered—

"Bruce, I do love you!"

He drew her face down to him and kissed her hot, burning kisses, that made her blush and tremble.

"My darling! My beautiful queen! You love me!"

He got up, still holding her hand, and put his other hand to his forehead with a low laugh, almost of apology.

"And I have mocked at love!" he said, half to himself.

For a moment there was silence, as he sat in his old place, holding her hand, and looking at her as if his hungry eyes could find no appeasement, and she—she sat looking at nothing, yet seeing him as plainly as if her eyes were fixed on his face.

So wrapt were they, so lost to the outer world, that they did not see the glimmer of a soft pink dress in the shrubs in front of them, did not hear the quick, sharp sob of a woman's voice, or feel the glare of a woman's eyes, that are not velvety now, but almost black with rage and jealousy.

"And you love me!" he said, in an amazed whisper. "Why, Floris, it is almost past belief."

"Is it?" with a little shy glance and a fleeting smile that made him long to catch her to his heart.

"Yes! I always thought you hated me!"

"Yes?"

"Yes! We never met but we quarreled. I never spoke a civil word to you froze me on the spot."

"Did I?" with a smile.

"That you did! There were times when after you had sent me away, with an icy glance or a word of contempt, that I felt too ashamed and humiliated to live! Why, what made you change so, Floris? Tell me; I am curious!"

"I have not changed!" with a stare of amazement and delight.

"No!" shaking her head, and turning her eyes shamefacedly from his ardent gaze. "No, I have not changed. Will you not look away from me, Bruce? you fill me with shame!—I loved you from the very first."

"Great Heaven!" he murmured, in a rapture. "From the first. Not from the first, Floris?"

"Yes," she said, making her confession with averted eyes and burning cheeks; "I think I loved you the first night I saw you. You, you told me that you loved me, remember."

"Yes, I did! Not knowing you were you! But you—you were Pride and Scorn and Hauteur combined."

She shook her head.

"Great Heaven, what actresses women are! And—and—all the time?"

"Yes," she admitted, and the admission was sweet. "All the time, Bruce. I fought against it. I told myself that I ought to hate you. I almost prayed that I might learn to do so. But it was no use."

He did not speak. His was a joy too deep for words.

"And when I felt it was of no use, why," with a sudden start, "I was like to die with shame when I remembered that perhaps you were already engaged, that—that Lady Blanche——"

He bit his lips, but his eyes met hers unflinchingly: the shrubs opposite them, behind which Lady Blanche stood, stirred and rustled as she pressed forward, straining her tortured ears to catch the response.

"Lady Blanche?" he said gravely, almost coldly. "Yes, I know. Floris, you had nothing to fear, you were misled. There was never anything tangible between us. I never loved her, never could have loved her. And if at any time there had been anything in my heart to her warmer than friendship, it would have vanished at your presence, dearest."

Awful words for that stricken woman to hear.

No wonder she turned white to the lips and staggered back, grasping a tree to keep herself from falling.

No wonder that possessed by the demon of jealousy, and the fire of unrequited love, she was compelled to press her hand to her lips till the teeth closed on them, to prevent the cry of despair and anguish that rose from her heart.

"Oh, I am glad," said Floris, with a little sigh. "I could not have shared your love. I could not have borne to think that I had only got it second hand. You see," with a little piteous smile that was very near tears "I am so proud."

He bent till his lips touched her beautiful hair.

"By heavens, I think I love you all the more for being so," he answered. "I would not have you altered by a hair's breadth, my darling. I think you perfect, bodily and mentally.

"Why I dream even, don't laugh, of your very dresses. To-night you look like a vision of cold, pure ice, you see. Proud. So you shall be. Be as proud as you like, so that you are not too proud to let me love you. And, I, too; I am proud. But I am a bad lot altogether, my poor darling. Heaven grant I may be able to conceal it from you."

She smiled trustingly enough.

"I will take you as you are, Bruce," she murmured.

"I am proud, too, little one," he said, very thoughtfully, "and a monster of jealousy."

She laughed softly.

"Are you? How much alike we are. My pride is only outdone by my jealousy. I warn you, Bruce, I shall grudge every smile you bestow on other women. I shall want all your soft speeches."

He laughed grimly.

"I was never wont to smile much, or very rich in soft speeches, my darling, but what I have in stock shall be reserved for you. Ah, you know well how wholly and entirely I am yours, bound body and soul to your chariot wheel, so much your slave that there is not another woman in the world that is worth a thought to me."

She put up her hand with a little, naive caress, and laid it against his cheek.

"Ah, how happy I am," she murmured, so low, and yet so distinct that it reached the hidden woman opposite them, and went to her heart like the stab of a knife.

Then Floris started.

"We must go. Why, how late it must be."

He laughed.

"It is not late. What does it matter? Who cares?"

"Oh, but I must, sir. Lady Pendleton, my mistress, has forgotten me, and I must find her."

He laughed with grim delight.

"Lady Betty, your mistress. Ha, ha. How surprised she will be, and yet, I don't know. I have caught her looking at me once or twice with that cock-sparrow expression in her eyes which makes her look so knowing. She will be delighted. Must we go? Let me put your cloak round you. Happy cloak. What a pretty one. What made you think of that dress, and its edging of swansdown? My beautiful angel," and he took her bodily and boldly in his arms.

"Oh, take care," she murmured, blushing, and looking round fearfully. "Someone will see us."

"Who cares? And to think that only this morning you snubbed me. Actually refused to sell me the flower from your bosom."

She blushed.

"Do you care to have it now?" she asked quietly,

"Care? Give me a chance of getting it," he retorted.

She took the crushed and withered red rose from within her dress and held it out to him.

Then as, with a cry of delight, he eagerly stretched out his hand, she whipped hers behind her.

"Give me something in exchange, Mr. Bruce."

He laughed, his short curt laugh.

"Take all I have," he said, then he glanced down and about him. He wore no rings no trinket he could despoil himself of.

"Give me that flower in your coat," said Floris.

"Ah, yes," he asserted, entirely forgetful of the woman who only that morning made him promise to wear it, who pinned it in his coat with loving hands. "Here you are. Give me my rose," and he took it from her, and with all a boy's love and a man's passion, kissed it before he hid it in an inner pocket.

And so they passed out, arm in arm, heart to heart.

For a moment Lady Blanche stood leaning against the palm, her face white as death her hands clenched at her side.

Death. She had died a thousand deaths in that last ten minutes.

Hope, joy, the future, all were dead, and from their ashes had sprung the demons of hate and jealousy.

Without a cry she sank on to a seat, and sat staring in front of her with clasped hands.

And she had lost him. Lost the man she loved more than life. And she had so nearly won him a week, a few days ago, he was almost hers.

The world had linked their names together. It wanted but the one word to make him hers irrevocably.

And now she had lost him. And why? Because of this chit of a country girl, this girl with the round face and the grey eyes, this servant of Lady Betty's.

Oh, Heaven, it was hard to bear. Hard, hard, hard. And he had told this girl that he had never loved, never could love Blanche.

Ah, it was hard to bear, too hard. She could not.

"I will not," she murmured, huskily; "I will not. There must be some way of stopping him, of baulking her. She has caught him with her doll's face, with her pretended modesty and shyness. He must be saved. He shall not marry her. I mean it. But how can I prevent it? How? how? Oh, if there was someone to help me, someone I could depend on."

She looked round wildly. "I am only a woman, a wronged, insulted, helpless woman. If there were only someone who could help me."

As if in answer to her prayer, a voice from behind her said, in a quiet, almost sarcastic tone—

"I will help you."

Lady Blanche started, and turning her white face over her shoulder, she saw a man standing half-hidden behind the ferns.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A KEY TO THE MONTHS.—It would be a great help to many persons if they could remember, throughout the year, on what day the 1st of January fell, and, by the following lines, the key to the months may be kept in mind:—

The first of October you'll find, if you try,
The second of April as well as July,
The third o September, which rhymes to December,
The fourth day of June, and no other, remember;
The fifth of the leap month, of March and November,
The sixth day of August, and seventh of May,
Show the first of the year in the name of the day;
But in leap year, when leap month has duly been reckoned,
These month-dates will show, not the first, but the second.

THE greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.

Bric-a-Brac.

SOAP MONEY.—According to a New York paper the small coin used in many parts of Mexico is of a somewhat peculiar character. It consists of small tablets of soap stamped with the government mark. These tablets can be used for washing purposes so long as the impression is not rendered illegible.

CAMELS AND TOBACCO.—An Englishman who took part in a Nile expedition informs us that camels are great friends of tobacco. If one smokes in front of one of these animals, he immediately comes close to the pipe, places his nose against the tobacco, and swallows the smoke. The raising his head, with his mouth open and looking up into the air, breathes a sigh full of ecstasy.

THE FIRST RICE.—In 1695, a brigantine from Madagascar came to anchor off Sullivan's Island, in Charleston Harbor. The Governor went on board the ship by invitation of the captain, and received from the latter a bag of rice seed, with information of the methods of its cultivation in Eastern countries and of its suitableness for food. The Governor divided the grain among his friends, who made experiments with it in different soils. From this small beginning, it is said, arose the cultivation of this staple of South Carolina and Georgia.

A DIRTY HOUSE.—In the reign of George the Second, one Crowle, a counsel of some eminence, made some observation before an election committee which was considered to reflect on the House itself. The House accordingly summoned him to their bar, and he was forced to receive a reprimand from the Speaker, on his knees. As he rose from the ground, with the utmost nonchalance, he took out his handkerchief, and, wiping his knees, coolly observed "that it was the dirtiest house he had ever been in in his life."

OF CLASSIC ORIGIN.—The cowardly pastime of cock-fighting is said to have had a classic origin. As Themistocles was leading the forces of Athens against the Persians, he met some cocks fighting, on which he commanded his army to halt, and thus addressed them: "Fellow-soldiers, observe these animals; they do not assail each other for the sake of country, nor for their paternal goods, nor for the sepulchres of their heroic ancestors, nor for glory, nor for children; but for mastery! How, then, ought you to fight who have all these things to contend for?" This homely but apt speech is said to have had powerful effect in animating the Athenians to victory; and, in order to perpetuate the memory of the incident, a law was afterwards passed that "there should be a public cock match on the stage every year." And hence, says Ælian arose the pastime of cock-fighting.

OLD PROVERBS.—"To make a virtue of necessity," comes from Chaucer, the father of English poetry and a man of infinite wit; and to him can be traced the saying, "In at one ear, out at the other," though in the quaint language of the day he said. "One ear it heard, and the other out it went." The proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes," comes from "Piers Plowman's Vision," a black-letter poem, and "Of two evils the less is always to be chosen," and "When he is out of sight, quickly also is he out of mind," the originals of "Out of sight, out of mind, and "Of two evils, choose the least," are from Thomas a Kempis. Thomas Tusser, who died in 1580, gave us "The stone that is rolling gathers no moss," "Better late than never," "It is an ill wind that turns none to good," "Christmas comes but once a year," "Safe bind, safe find," "Look ere you leap, see ere thou go," and "Such master, such man."

FAMOUS HOT SPELLS.—In 1303 and 1304, according to a French periodical, the Rhine, Loire and Seine ran dry. In 1615 the heat throughout Europe became excessive. Scotland suffered particularly in 1625; men and beasts died in scores. The heat in several departments during the summer of 1705 was equal to that in a glass furnace. Meat could be cooked by merely exposing it to the sun. Not a soul dare venture out between noon and 4 P. M. In 1718 many shops had to close; the theatres never opened their doors for several months. Not a drop of water fell during six months. In 1773 the thermometer rose to 118 degrees. In 1779 the heat at Bologna was so great that a great number of people were stifled. There was not sufficient air for the breath, and people had to take refuge under ground. In July, 1793, it become intolerable. Vegetables were burned up and fruit dried upon the trees. The furniture and woodwork in dwelling-houses cracked and split up; meat went bad in an hour.

IN SWEDEN.—One great peculiarity of traveling in Sweden is the extreme quiet and lack of flurry. The Swedish are a taciturn and noiseless people. They do much by signs, and never shout; a Swedish crowd make little sound. Swedes, even of the lowest class, never push or jostle. When a train leaves the platform or a steamboat pier all the lookers-on lift their hats to the departing passengers and bow to them, a compliment returned by the travelers. If you address the poorest person in the streets you must lift your hat. A gentleman passing a lady on the stairs of a hotel must do the same. To enter a shop or a bank with one's hat on is a terrible breach of good manners. If you enter or leave a coffee room you must bow to all the occupants. Passengers on board the little steamers which ply about Stockholm invariably raise their hats to the occupants of any other boat which passes near them. The very men in charge of the locks on the canal bow very politely to the sailors as the boats go through.

AT MORNING TIME.

BY E. J. TENNEY.

Low in this dim nook, hollowed by
  The passing footfalls of the years,
  And steep'd in twilight's pensive tears-
While the sweet seasons dawn and die—
The ashes of my dead hopes lie.

Oh! lost love, when the mornings break
  Above you savage mountain lines,
  The rolling threnody of pines,
The murmurs of the torrent wake
Some deathless sorrow—for your sake.

Aloft in white, benignant grace
  The vision of the morning star
  Shines on me from the depths afar,
As if some tranquil angel face
Smiled out of unimagined space.

And wind, and wave, and moving cloud—
  The vastness of the primal woods—
  The barren, wild infinitudes—
The towering heights, Titanic browed—
The cataracts that call aloud—

All wear their old, familiar guise,
  I only miss your presence, sweet;
  The music of your tripping feet;
The glory of the hidden eyes,
That made this waste a paradise.

The dark stern pines o'erlean
  Your grave; the desert winds that pass
  Stir drearily the stealthy grass
That, reaching sunward, creeps between
  Your fair face and the morning sheen.

Thou comest not with dewy dawn;
  Nor when these summits, vast and old,
  Are drowned in noontide's torrent gold,
Or sunset's rosy arc is drawn
Round th' illimitable horizon.

But, angel of my dreams, whene'er
  The twilight threads with living fire
  Her many-chorded, starry lyre,
From out thine awful hidden sphere,
My love, I know thou drawest near!

GOLDEN LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WYCHFIELD HORROR," "LOVER AND LORD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.—(CONTINUED.)

"HER husband—yes," she answers calmly. "You know all about that painful affair, I suppose, Sir Everard?"

"Her husband!" repeats Fane; and there is an intensity of pain in his voice. "What does this mean? Is not Beryl d'Arcy a widow? Mrs. Carrington, for Heaven's sake, tell me what you mean?"

"I thought every one knew," says Theodora, without seeming to notice his emotion. "It was a terrible blow to all of us. Poor child, she run away from boarding-school, when she was only seventeen, with a foreign scamp of whom she knew absolutely nothing."

"And he is still alive?" says Fane. "Can this be true?"

The sense of the words hardly seems to reach him.

"Yes, he is still alive."

"Had you guessed nothing, Mrs. Carrington," he continues, "that I was not told of this before? Her husband alive, and I—Heaven help me—I should have asked her to-morrow to be my wife!"

"I am very sorry for you," says Theodora genuinely moved. "But, Sir Everard, I knew nothing of your friendship. How could I guess that you did not know all? We do not care, naturally, to speak of it more than can be helped. But it is quite true; Louis d'Arcy is alive."

"Will you tell me all about it?" he asks quietly.

He stands by the mantelpiece, with its curious vases and Japanese fans and array of dainty knick-knacks—stands facing her, and facing too the lace-hung window and the soft afternoon sunlight.

Can it be but five minutes which have changed that animated happy face and those bright glad eyes to his white rival countenance and these haggard looks?

"It will not take long to tell," answers Theodora. "Beryl's life was quickly wrecked. During the holidays at school she got acquainted with D'Arcy, the son of a man who then kept a large gambling-place in town."

"I know the man," says Fane very simply.

"You know him?" exclaims Theodora, amazed.

"Coming up to London fresh from college," says Fane, "a friend took me to that place in Graham Street. I was easily persuaded to try my luck at the tables. For a month I haunted them, fairly fascinated, lost all my ready-money, and ran deeply into debt, then discovered that I had been cheated out of it in barefaced style by the proprietor's son, this Louis d'Arcy. The shame and anger at being thus cheated cured me of gambling.

"My father sent me abroad directly afterwards; but, before going, I went once more to D'Arcy's, and told Louis d'Arcy what I knew and thought of his trickery. I shall never forget the expression of his face, the cool contempt with which he invited me to try again and hope for better luck. It was not a face to forget, for he was the most strikingly handsome fellow I have ever seen, and in a peculiar way. I shall never forget even his hand, a long-fingered, thin, gambler's hand. And how did Beryl come into this man's power?"

"It does not take much to deceive a schoolgirl," answers Theodora sadly. "He was, as you say, handsome. He went down to Ealing at a time when she was less under surveillance than usual, passed himself off as a Count, and persuaded her to run off with him to London, where they were married.

"George and Marcus followed them, and were just too late. They brought Beryl back at once, and the Court of Chancery—Beryl was a ward in Chancery—took up the matter. D'Arcy was imprisoned for a time and Beryl's money was settled on her safe enough, poor child; but marriage unfortunately cannot be broken so easily even by Courts and Chancellors."

"And then?"

"She was very ill for a long while, and he agreed to wait for a year; and in the meantime we thought he intended to get into a better way of life, for he seemed at the time really devoted to her. Poor Beryl at least believed so. She went to live with my father in Yorkshire; he went abroad, and she insisted on making him a good allowance.

"He was her husband, she said, and she was still half-fascinated, I think. He has never come back, fortunately for her. She may well pay the money gladly to keep him away. He was enslaved by his old vice—gaming—and now, I believe, spends his time between Paris and Homburg. He has made no attempt to see her since they were parted. That is all, Sir Everard."

"Thank you," says Fane, in low tones. "As you say, a life may be very quickly wrecked."

And he leaves.

The next day Theodora Carrington gets a brief letter from him.

"You know my secret," he says, "and I am sure you will keep it. I cannot bear to meet her any more. I leave England as soon as possible—in a day or two."

Theodora reads it with a deep sigh.

"Poor Beryl!" she murmurs. "If only she had waited until she knew her own mind! She would have been living with me, have met Everard Fane, and married him happily."

CHAPTER VI.

BREAKFAST is set out in Mrs. D'Arcy's parlor, and Beryl, very fair and graceful in her white morning dress, is arranging some flowers with deft fingers, waiting for Mrs. Richardson to appear on the scene.

There is a happy light in her eyes, happier now than any seen there since the day, six years ago, which made her a married woman.

She does not know why, or the brightness might well fade; she does not guess as yet her heart's secret. She is humming softly a little song—

"The rain is on the river,
  But the sun is on the hill,
And I know the clouds will sever
  When the storm has had its will."

It seems to her, though she does not translate the feeling into definite thought, that the storm of her life is clearing, and that she can see the golden sunlight gleaming on the hills.

And to-day, as she sits with the basket of flowers before her, beautiful and smiling, the soft color on her cheeks, singing of that sunshine, looking up and hoping, the clouds are gathering up blackly around her threatening to shut out even that distant glimpse of radiance.

When the roses are displayed to perfection in the sparkling vase, Beryl goes to the breakfast-table and turns over the letters carelessly. Letters are not often interesting to her.

An invitation or two on scented and crested paper, a stiff epistle from Mrs. Serle, senior, a formal communication from her lawyer, make up the sum of Mrs. D'Arcy's ordinary correspondence.

This morning, among the envelopes is one bearing a handwriting she does not know—a bold, thick calligraphy, and the post-mark is Dover.

She opens it, and, as the first words catch her eyes, her heart throbs, her breath comes fast, and the hands which hold it tremble. She did not know the writing; but the signature to the sheet is "Louis d'Arcy"—her husband—and this is what he writes to her.

My dear Wife,—I am sure you must acknowledge that, in all these years, since you took me for better and for worse, to love and cherish, I have not interfered with you much, nor do I wish to trouble you unreasonably now. But, I must say, it's hard on a husband to be expected to wander about on the face of the earth, and walk to and fro in it, while his beloved wife is enjoying herself in tip-top London drawing-rooms. Baden-Baden is all very well while the luck is on one's side; but it left me long ago.

"In short, I'm in debt and hard-up. I think, therefore, of reforming and coming home to live happily ever after. Of course, you need not support me; but I don't think you will like a broken-down, out-at-elbows wretch for a husband, and what you have will do very well for two to live on, if you are not extravagant—so well, that it would be greedy of me to want more. You may possibly be rather startled by this sudden determination of mine; you have been a grass widow so long.

"But the fact is I can't keep body and soul together any longer on the miserable pittance your respected cousin and your respectable lawyer dole out to me. I shall wait here for your answer, as I don't wish to come too suddenly on your fashionable friends. What do you say to having a second elopement and joining me here? Upon the whole, I prefer la belle France to England; but what's the use of a wife under present conditions? Can you suggest better? You may be sure I did not marry you for two hundred and fifty francs a week.

"Your affectionate husband,
"LOUIS D'ARCY."

She turns from the sight of the letter with loathing and dread; yet he is her husband.

She did not recognize his handwriting, the tones of his voice are almost forgotten his face would perhaps be hardly known by her; but he can come to her any day, perhaps to-morrow, and claim his own right.

* * * * * *

"I am going to see Miss Fane," Beryl says, as soon as the meal is over.

"Very well, my dear," answers Mrs. Richardson; "I suppose you will not want my company. Perhaps the walk will do you good. Or will you drive?"

Miss Fane is alone in her pretty boudoir at work. She welcomes Beryl cordially, with affectionate greeting and smiling, truthful eyes.

Mary Fane is not in the least pretty; but her face, like her brother's, is full of expression and earnestness.

"I daresay you are surprised by such an early call," Beryl begins, with the very ghost of a smile on her trembling lips; "but I wanted to ask you—to have your advice."

"I shall be very glad to be of any use," Mary pleasantly answers. "You look as if some care were on you, dear. What is it?"

"I have just heard," Beryl says—and then she breaks down, and, falling upon her knees by Mary's side, bursts into a passion of sobs and tears. "I am in great trouble, Mary," she cries, "and I want some help!"

Mary Fane bends down, and puts her arm round the girl's neck, and tries to console and comfort her.

Mary grows half frightened, and fears her friend is going into violent hysterics. But presently Beryl, with a strong effort, represses the tears.

They have ceased her pain; and she can speak and think more clearly now that they have come.

"It is my husband," she says quite calmly, in suppressed tones. "You know about my marriage, Mary?"

"Yes," says Mary, still caressing her gently.

She has only known of it some fifteen hours; but of the shock it still gives her to hear of Louis d'Arcy's existence she betrays nothing.

"He has written to me for the first time—the first, and we have been married six years, Mary. He is in England, and he says he is coming back to me."

"And you, Beryl?"

"I? Mary tell me what I ought to do. I would rather die than this should happen! I could not bear it after all these years, while he has lived his life and I mine! I feel that I shall hate him if he comes near me. I will give him all my money if he will stay away; and it was only for my money, you know, that he married me—only my money, nothing else!"

The sudden inflection of voice from the cry of terror to the wail of sadness is full of pathos.

Mary Fane pauses. How can she advise Beryl to take back a husband she scarcely knows, a man who has treated her as Louis d'Arcy has—has lived on and gambled away her money without endeavoring to catch even a glimpse of her, his wife? A great flood of sympathy goes out from her heart to the cruelly-deceived girl, the deserted bride.

"I dare not see him," Beryl goes on, shuddering—"I dare not put myself within his reach. If you think I cannot buy him off, I will run away and hide myself. If you had read this letter, you would see he does not care for me; he writes with sneers and jests, and yet he threatens me! There is no trace—not one—of any love for me; it is cruel and heartless from beginning to end.

"I knew he did not care, I had learned it; but I did not think he could ever write like this. I believed in him so truly once, Mary, when he took my hand in that dark gloomy church, and I went on hoping so long that he was not all they said, not altogether an impostor and a hypocrite. And now he sneers at our marriage-vow, while he is on his way to claim me as his wife!"

"If I were you," says Mary Fane, in clear confident tones, striving to rouse Beryl from her faltering tremulous misery, "I would get some one else to go to him where he is, and arrange matters with him. I do not doubt he will be easily persuaded to leave you alone."

"Do you think so?" questions Beryl wistfully. "I have three thousand five hundred a year altogether. It will be more abroad than in England. He may have every penny if he will leave me."

"I do not suppose that will be needed," answers Mary cheerfully. "It would be wisest to send some one to meet him at once, instead of answering his letter—some one who would be firm and business-like, and whom you could trust to act as you wish."

"Whom can I ask?" says Beryl. "I know only one man whom I could trust like that. Do you think your brother would do it for me, Mary?"

"Everard!" Mary starts. Everard has told her something of his love for Beryl; but, womanlike, she had guessed it long ago.

"Yes, Sir Everard," answers Beryl. There is no sign of consciousness or suspicion of Mary's thoughts in the tearful, beseeching eyes that meet Mary's so earnestly; they are innocent and clear as a child's. "I am asking too much," she falters. "You think I am presuming on your friendship; but she has been so good to me—I seem to have no other friend."

"The most suitable person," says Mary, "would be your cousin, Mr. Serle, who is a lawyer."

Beryl draws herself back sharply, a tide of color flows to her brow, and the expression of her face changes utterly.

"I would go myself rather than ask Marcus Serle," she says. "Perhaps you are right; but you do not know all. It would be draining the bitter cup to the dregs to ask the help of Marcus or of George Carrington to save me from my husband!"

There is a brief silence. The first dread coldness is creeping back over Beryl, and her face grows pale and set as marble. She rises.

"Good-bye," she says quietly. "You would have helped me, I know, if you could. It may be right I should have this punishment. I could not bear to see him in London; but, if I cannot keep him away by any other means, I will go back to France with him. Whatever happens—if I go with him or hide from him somewhere where I cannot be found—you and Sir Everard will endeavor to think kindly of me, Mary, and to believe that I am trying to act rightly and do my duty; and, if I cannot, pray for me that I may die!"

"Beryl, Beryl," cries Mary, catching the calm white-faced girl in her arms, "you shall not go! Do not talk like that; I cannot bear it. Everard shall go at once to Mr. D'Arcy, and keep him from you at all costs. Do you think he would not do more than that to help you?"

CHAPTER VII.

ON the afternoon of the same day, Marcus Serle, walking rapidly up the Mall on the way to his club, feels a sharp tap on his arm, and, looking round, finds a man at his elbow—a dark foreign-looking man with a bronzed face, black hair, and glittering black eyes.

He is apparently between thirty and forty and is dressed fashionably and even foppishly, carries a crutch-cane and wears his hat jauntily set.

No one would mistake him for a gentleman; he may be a "professional" of some kind, a third-rate actor or singer, with which station the marks of dissipation on his handsome face accord.

He has been lounging in the Mall some time, sitting and staring absently at the facade of Buckingham Palace and reading *Le Temps*; and fortune favors him, for here is the man he wishes to see, and very few other people are about.

"I suppose you know me, Mr. Serle," he says, with impudently assumed deference—"your unworthy friend Louis, d'Arcy?"

Marcus starts violently, horror and dismay in his face, and for a moment stands aghast, completely taken off his guard. But he seems to have no difficulty in recognizing D'Arcy. Then anger comes to his relief.

"What do you want?" he asks very savagely.

"Pleasant greeting," the stranger laughs mockingly, "to an old and valued friend! Perhaps I want my wife, Mr. Serle?"

"You impudent blackguard, what do you mean?" cries Marcus. "How dare you come after me talking so about your wife?"

"Would you rather I went to her, Mr. Serle?"

"You would not have the audacity."

"Indeed! What will you take on that point?" says D'Arcy tauntingly. "Is it so presumptuous to pay a visit to one's wife?"

Marcus Serle holds in his passion with a strong hand, and speaks now with a coolness equal to D'Arcy's own.

"You have got all that up very cleverly," he says. "But, as my time is valuable, I should suggest that you drop it now, and tell me why you are here."

"Allow me to congratulate you on the value of your time," returns D'Arcy; "that means six-and-eightpence an hour, I believe? And it is just this want of six-and-eightpence that has brought me to fickle Albion! In short, my friend, I find that life on five hundred a year is not worth living."

"Then don't live!"

"Really? I fancied my existence was of some use to my valued friend. If I were to drop off, my disconsolate widow might—in time—take another spouse, and divert a tidy fortune from its rightful heir."

"Where the mischief have you been hunting up all those infernal lies? I tell you plainly not a penny above your present allowance will you ever get, if I can help it!"

"Very well. Perhaps Mrs. D'Arcy will not be so cruel as that. I will pay her a visit."

"I don't think you will do nothing of the kind."

"I have already written to prepare her," says D'Arcy; "so it will not be such a shock to find her long-lost husband before her. I told her the allowance she made me was not sufficient to atone for absence from her."

"If you go near her," says Serle firmly, "the result will be that you get not another farthing beyond what your wits help you to. You know what that means?"

"Perfectly. Allow me to add that I would make the affair complete by giving full details of your connection with it."

"Pooh!" answers Serle. "What should I care about that? Who do you suppose would believe a raked-up story like that?"

"We would, at all events, try it," says D'Arcy very coolly. "I think I could piece it together neatly. You would find it interesting to conduct your own case, no doubt. I could make myself disagreeable, Mr. Serle, both to you and to my wife, if I chose. But I don't wish to; so you had better come down a peg and get the cash advanced!"

For a while Serle hesitates. He thinks of Beryl's fair innocent face, and half resolves to let D'Arcy do his worst rather than hand over more of her money to be gambled and drunk away by this fellow.

But his wife and Cecil are dearer to him than Beryl. Beryl will miss a thousand a year less than Cecil would by-and-by miss the whole of her fortune. The game has begun; must it not be played out?"

"How much do you want?" he asks very shortly.

"Make it an even thou.—pounds, not francs—per annum, and I'll try to live on it to oblige you."

"I will see about it. But it must be on this condition—that you take yourself off from London as quickly as possible, and attempt neither to write to nor see me again. I'll send a cheque after you when I am sure you are gone, and then don't let me hear of you for three months, unless you like to take the consequences. Get out of England and go to France, Germany, or——"

"That will do. I accept the conditions.

"And don't dream," adds Marcus, "that it is, or ever will be, of any use trying to intimidate me. My reputation is equal to any lies you can muster up."

"No doubt," says the other. "Au revoir!"

And, as he saunters back to his hotel, lightly twirling his cane, he adds to himself—

"Stand lies? Oh, yes! But how about the truth, Mr. Marcus Serle?"

When Serle reaches his club, there is some gossip going on among two or three of its members a-propos of Everard Fane.

"I told you, Pennington, he looked awfully queer yesterday when I met him. I wonder what's up?"

"I tell you what they say," remarks another.

"What's that?"

"Why, that it's something about Mrs. D'Arcy's husband, and that he is going to see if he can't get a divorce."

"By Jove, D'Arcy is alive then? It was Fane then——"

"Hush!" interrupts Lord Langton. "Keep quiet, you fellows, do! Here's Serle!"

"I say, Serle," Pennington goes on, "where is Fane off to in such a hurry?"

"Did not know he was off," answers Marcus.

"Oh, yes, he departs for Dover, en route for the Continent, this evening, I hear; put off all his engagements, et-cetera! Is it a money concern?"

"I know nothing about it," answers Serle. "I have enough to do without getting curious over my neighbors' business."

And he leaves them to their chatter. But at night he sends away a brief letter, with a cheque enclosed for two hundred and fifty pounds, containing these words—

"Sir Everard Fane, a London gentleman has to-night left for Dover and Paris. If you see him, there is an end of your game. If he comes to the hotel where you are stopping, leave him at once. If he goes by the same steamer, pass yourself under another name. If you hope for more from this source, avoid him. He is an old friend of yours."

That is all. There is no beginning, no signature. Marcus Serle takes the letter away in his pocket and posts it himself. It is addressed to "Mr. L. d'Arcy, the Harp Hotel, Dover."

The recipient of this letter reads it over his late breakfast the next morning, and ponders its meaning as he eats his devilled kidneys.

"Waiter," he presently inquires, "is Sir Everard Fane staying here?"

"No, sir; not here—staying at the Lord Warden, sir. Called this morning at ten o'clock, asking for you, sir, and said he should be on the cliffs didn't, he would call again at one, sir, as he wants to see you on very important and peculiar business."

"Just so," mutters D'Arcy. "I wonder what is in the wind now?"

"Beg pardon, sir?"

D'Arcy does not respond. He cogitates five minutes longer. The clock-hands point at five-and-twenty minutes to one.

It would seem scarcely worth while going out to join Sir Everard at this hour, one would suppose; it would certainly be very unwise to openly run away from him.

"Look here, waiter; I must go out on business to cash a cheque before I meet this gentleman. When I leave the bank, I'll look for him upon the cliff, and, if I don't find him, I shall come straight back here. I shall not be long; but, if he should happen to call before I am back, get him to wait here. I am very anxious to see him, and I would rather have the interview here; and it is of no use to dodge about after each other out of doors."

"No, sir. Sir Everard said where you would most likely find him."

"All right. Don't make any mistake, because it is important I should see him. Detain him here till I return."

"Certainly, sir."

And the waiter slips a gratifying douceur into his pocket, and makes his most obsequious bow.

D'Arcy puts on his hat and saunters out. The waiter however has no opportunity of detaining Sir Everard Fane, for Sir Everard does not return at the appointed hour.

It is presumed he has met Mr. D'Arcy, and of Mr. D'Arcy the Harp Hotel sees no more.

It is just six days later when Marcus Serle finds at his rooms in Lincoln's Inn a Dover newspaper and a letter with the Dover postmark.

Unheeding the letter, which lies under a heap of others, Serle notes the title—*Dover Mercury*, and thinking of, though scarcely associating with it, the recent visit of his friend, tears the paper open.

A paragraph is neatly marked with red ink, and Marcus reads—

"Mysterious Disappearance.—Considerable excitement has been created in this town by the mysterious and unaccountable disappearance of a gentleman who had been staying for several days at the Harp Hotel.

"On Saturday last a well-dressed gentlemanly man, about thirty-five years of age, arrived at Dover from the Continent, and engaged a room at the Harp, saying he should require it for at least a week. He gave the name of D'Arcy, and appeared to be French, paid for the apartment in advance, and was very liberal in his dealing with servants and others. On Monday, he went to London to see some friends; but the friends' names or addresses did not transpire. He returned at night and slept at the hotel.

"The same evening a gentleman took rooms at the Lord Warden Hotel, and made inquiries immediately on his arrival as to the whereabouts of Mr. D'Arcy. In the morning he called at the Harp and left word—Mr. D'Arcy not being up—that he wished to see him on important private business—would be found during the morning at a particular part of the cliff, and would call again at one o'clock. Mr. D'Arcy subsequently expressed himself as greatly desirous to see this gentleman, whom he appeared to have been expecting. He went out at about half-past twelve, saying that he wished to cash a cheque before meeting his friend—would join him, if possible, on the cliff, and, if unable to find him there, would return to the hotel without delay.

"He has not since been heard of. It is feared that he has fallen over the cliff, or, having a large sum of money about him, has been the victim of foul play. His supposed friend did not call again at the Harp—left somewhat hurriedly for Calais. The only trace of Mr. D'Arcy as yet found is that he cashed a cheque for two hundred and fifty pounds at the London and County Bank, shortly after leaving the Harp.

"He is described as about five feet eight inches in height, dark complexion, hair, and moustache, and dressed in a black suit, with high hat, red tie, and wearing a gold watch and chain and several jewelled rings. His portmanteau, left at the Harp Hotel, contains various articles of clothing, *et-cetera*, unmarked, a morocco purse with some French and English money, and several visiting-cards bearing the name of 'Mr. D'Arcy.'

"This is now in the possession of the police, who are instituting inquiries, and have, we believe, communicated with the payer of the cheque above-mentioned, who, it may be said, is a well-known barrister, and with the London address of the gentleman under whose name the apartment at the Lord Warden was taken—a member of Parliament. No clue whatever has, so far, been received as to the fate of Mr. D'Arcy, and the wildest rumors are now in circulation."

Having read through this, Marcus Serle examines his letters hurriedly, and breaks the seal of that from Dover. When he has mastered its contents, he sits down, with his elbow on the table and his head resting on his hand, and thinks it over.

It is perfectly clear that Everard Fane is in an unpleasant position. Marcus may know a good deal concerning Mr. Louis d'Arcy, including the receipt by him of a certain note respecting Sir Everard Fane's visit to Dover; but it is certain that the world generally does not share this knowledge, and, having regard to Serle's reputation, must not.

Doubtless Sir Everard can explain his hasty departure for France, and give a clear denial to any meeting with D'Arcy; but what will the world say—the world which has already applied itself to coupling the names of Sir Everard Fane and Beryl d'Arcy?

Marcus does not for a moment believe that anything has happened to D'Arcy; he is confident in his own mind that the man has slightly disguised himself—not for the first time in his life—and either departed by the earliest boat for Calais, or taken train to Folkestone, and then crossed to Boulogne.

To communicate with D'Arcy would, of course, settle the question; but there are two reasons against this. First, Serle does not know his address, and is not likely to know it for three months—has he not given D'Arcy orders to that effect? Money paid through a Paris bank, and receipts from D'Arcy, have constituted the correspondence which has passed between them for years.

He might telegraph to Calais and Boulogne; but from this Marcus shrinks. Why should he publicly declare his confidence in D'Arcy's existence and his superior knowledge of D'Arcy's habits? It might—and this is the second reason—be ruin to him just now to have D'Arcy brought into prominence, and an examination made into the cause of his flight.

With the guilty conscience which makes cowards of all, Serle turns from the open and best course before him at once. There is not himself only to think about—there are Philippa and the boy—the boy above all.

He knows nothing absolutely. Why not let things take their own course? It is impossible that conclusive evidence can be brought against Fane, whose name and position will be respected.

Beryl cannot marry on the mere supposition of her husband's death, nor will she, in face of the clouds of rumor, continue to meet Fane. When D'Arcy is again heard of, the talk will have been forgotten, and some simple explanation can be easily given.

So Serle settles it; then for a minute he thinks—suppose this rumor be true?

Beryl D'Arcy is fettered by a worthless husband, for whose existence it would be absurd to suppose she is thankful. Everard Fane loves her, and has but lately learned of the one great impediment in his way.

He knows very well it was an innocent request of Beryl which sent Fane to Dover; he has assumed that a letter or telegram from her, telling him there is no longer need for his intervention since her cousin has settled the business, was the cause of Fane's departure.

But it is possible that Fane and D'Arcy have met. Serle knows D'Arcy well—knows the taunting insolence he can use, and that Fane has been accused of hasty temper.

The two men stand alone together on the cliff; no friendly thoughts are in the mind of either; the mention of Beryl's name brings Fane's wrath to a white heat, or D'Arcy, if the "old friendship" should rise up against him, makes a sudden attack on Fane. A movement of anger or of self-defence on the part of Everard, and his antagonist is over the precipice beyond man's anger or man's succor.

The picture is horribly real.

Once drawn, it haunts Serle's brain; but he laughs scoffingly, seeks to set it aside, and writes an answer to his Dover letter.

He paid the cheque, he says, to Mr. D'Arcy, on behalf of Mr. D'Arcy's wife, as the amount of his quarterly allowance. He has not heard and does not anticipate hearing from Mr. D'Arcy again until the termination of three months. In the meantime, he may state that the gentleman is of eccentric habits, and has most probably suddenly determined on his return to France by some departing boat, knowing the bag left behind was of little value. Sir Everard Fane, he believes, wished to see him on some business which later advices informed him had been transacted. There is—and in this he can speak as an experienced barrister—not a particle of reason for assuming that Sir Everard Fane has anything whatever to do with Mr. D'Arcy's disappearance, or that there existed any possibility of disagreement between the two. And Mr. Serle hopes that Sir Everard's name will not be mixed up in the affair by local scribblers, or that any exaggerations of the so-called "mysterious" nature of it will be allowed to create a quite unnecessary excitement.

CHAPTER VIII.

It is a wet and chilly autumn day, with a cold wind whirling away the leaves that fall so sadly soon in London, and with a drizzling rain blown in the faces of pedestrians, and making the dirty pavement still more unpleasant to walk upon—such a day as is particularly calculated to make those under the government of careful and methodical housewives long for a blazing fire in place of the elegant flowers, the æsthetic curtains, or the Japanese umbrella in the grate; to make existence dreary indoors and wretched out of doors; but such a day, also, as makes a cheerful room doubly cheerful, and a red coal on the hearth doubly bright.

Theodora Carrington never allows her house to appear dismal because the weather is disagreeable. To-day there is a bright fire in her small drawing-room, hot-house plants on the side-tables, new books on the gipsy-stand, new music on the open piano, and two low chairs drawn near the tiled hearth and the stone fender.

In one of the chairs Theodora sits, some fancy-work in her hands, and glowing tints of fading leaves about her dress, a dark rich brown robe with crimson ribbons and slashings of yellow.

She is smiling and talking, but there is an anxious look in her bright dark eyes, and a trace, rarely seen, of lines and wrinkles about her low forehead and rounded cheeks. Beryl notes them and wonders, for Theodora is only thirty-two, and has taken the world easily.

It is Beryl who occupies the other chair, her plain black dress in strong contrast with her bright surroundings. She herself is pale, her eyes weary, her figure drooping. She does not know what is the matter with her, for the mystery of D'Arcy's disappearance has been rigidly kept from her. She only knows that the absence of Mary Fane, who had left town to join relatives in Scotland a few days after Sir Everard's departure, makes her feel more solitary than she remembers to have felt before; that she misses the brother and sister every hour of every day, and that her interest in everything around her seems to flag.

Theodora is looking at the slight listless figure, and noting the droop of the pretty mouth and the paleness of the fair smooth cheeks.

"Beryl," she says, "I shall insist on your going away for change of air. It is exactly what you need, and you are losing all your good looks here."

"I am going away soon," answers Beryl. "You have just come back yourself, you see, Theo, so you think it is getting late for everybody's holidays. But Mrs. Richardson is looking after apartments somewhere."

"Where?"

"I forget," says Beryl. "In Wales, I think."

"There is another thing I want to mention, Beryl," Theodora goes on speaking quickly and gazing into the fire. "I wish you would not wear black dresses. They do not suit you at all."

"You seem to have grown anxious about my appearance," says Beryl, smiling faintly. "Surely black is most appropriate for this weather?"

"What does the weather matter to you? I especially do not want to see you in black, Beryl. It is not a joke; I ask it as a favor, for reasons of my own."

"I will wear whatever you like best," answers Beryl, "and abjure black for a twelvemonth."

"That is right," says Theo. "And now sing me something, my dear, till tea is ready."

But what makes Beryl discard the new songs on the piano and in the canterbury by her side, and choose that sad sweet song she sang when Everard Fane first heard her clear, pure voice? Is it the autumn weather, is it memory, or is it a foreboding in her heart?

"The swallows are making them ready to fly,
Wheeling out on a windy sky.
Good-bye, summer—good-bye! . . .
"Again, my heart,
What are we waiting for, you and I?
A pleading look, a stifled cry,
Good-bye for ever—good-bye!"

It may be there is in her mind the thought of that evening, only four months ago, as she strikes the opening chords of the ballad, or it may be the song which brings Fane to her thoughts.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

SOLD AGAIN.—A Clergyman who ministered to the spiritual wants of a district in the North of England some years ago was in the habit of going his "rounds" mounted on a pony; for, as in most rural localities, the dwelling-places in his parish were somewhat scattered. Now this pony aforesaid had carried his master well and faithfully for many years, till in due time it naturally grew old and slow.

Here it may be noted that the pony was rather strikingly marked, having white legs and a bay body, on which, however, were a few irregular white spots.

The parson, though loth to part with such a very old companion, and assistant, yet perceived that it was advisable, nay, imperative that he should procure a pony or horse whose movements would be more active, and whose years were not quite so patriarchal. Accordingly, taking advantage of the most convenient fair, he repaired thither with the object of realising by the sale of his old pony at least a proportion of the cost of an animal more suited to his requirements.

He had been cautioned by his groom to be careful, but had confidently assured that well-meaning functionary that he would not be easily deceived; he was good enough judge to buy what he wanted in the shape of horseflesh, at all events.

He duly arrived at the fair, and presently found a customer for his pony. He pointed out that its only fault was that it had grown rather aged and slow for the work he had to do; but it might suit an easier style of riding or driving.

And now there only remained the acquiring of another steed. After inspecting—in an assumed authoritative manner—several "samples," there was presently led up to him a smart, brisk-looking pony, just about the size of the one he had sold.

He was respectfully but firmly told that this was the very thing he wanted, and it certainly appeared to be quite a "catch" in the way of horseflesh; it was a nice bay color, so, liking the looks of him, and after the usual amount of bargaining and discussion had been indulged in, our parson became possessed of the treasure, which he at once mounted, and as he trotted merrily home he prided himself on his shrewdness and good fortune.

Now would he show that officious and self-opinionated man of his that there were others who knew a good horse when they saw one besides his gaitership!

On reaching home, his purchase attracted a considerable amount of attention, and approbation on the part of all interested excepting the groom, who stood quietly by, his features wearing that peculiarly immovable expression common to the "horsey" fraternity; though anyone might, by the aid of a "double million" magnifying glass have detected the ghost of a smile lurking round the closely-set mouth.

After further examinations and congratulations on the parson's acquisition, the "fiery untamed" was consigned to the groom, who, still solemn and unsmiling, gently took off the bridle, led him to the stable, and lo! the "strange pony walked straight into the stall of his predecessor.

Of course the astute reader has already divined where the "sold again" part of the business comes in, and how the "new" pony was really the old one after all, only "doctored up."

His white legs and marks had been colored to make him one uniform shade. His activity had been imbibed by him in the form of skilfully administered stimulants. History does not record what were the expressions employed by the person in giving vent to his mortification and annoyance.

IN VIRTUE'S CAUSE.

BY WILLIAM MACKINTOSH.

Affliction lays a heavy hand on some
  Who lacking spirit, pine away and die;
While unto Death, tho' he may threat to come
  Another turns a strong defiant eye.

He calls to aid a brave unyielding heart
  That wins the fight half both 'gainst fate or pain.
His will undflinching well sustains its part
  Till health restored thro' all his vitals reign.

So a twin might within the human breast
  May o'er temptation hold a rod of sway;
If man would aye his moral courage test,
  Vice, crime, and guilt might well be held at bay.

Under The Ground.

BY PHYLLIS.

"YOU will never persuade Penruddock to go," remarked Halford, very decisively.

"We shall not attempt to persuade—we shall insist!" returned Illona, imperiously. "Lily, come with me and ask him."

Penruddock was standing on the hearthrug, contentedly doing nothing, only stroking the back of his handsome head from time to time.

He was irreproachably dressed as usual. Indeed, who had ever seen Penruddock otherwise?

"What do you—ah—want with me?" he asked.

"I want to go down one of the mines; it is only about twenty minutes' walk from here; we shall be back in time for dinner.

"Mr. Gwynn says we can go, if six people will volunteer. Lily and I are going, and Mr. Halford Gwynn, and the bride and bridegroom Mr. and Mrs. Budd, and you must come and make the sixth," said Illona speaking very rapidly.

"Are you—are you referring to one of the coal mines?" inquired Penruddock, slowly. He always spoke slowly.

"Yes, of course; as I have told Mr. Gwynn," rattled on Illona, "what is the good of being the richest coal-mine proprietor in Cornwall, and of filling this big house with all his friends at Christmas, unless he allows them to see the mines, and to go down into the mines whenever they choose? Why, I shall doubt the existence of the mines altogether unless I see them for myself."

"You might see them—ah—without going down into them, don't you know?"

"Nonsense; you can only see a stack of ugly chimneys outside. I want to see the real coal-seams, and the galleries and trucks and all those sort of thing."

"Ah, I don't fancy 'those sort of things' are particularly clean," pursued Penruddock, reflectively, drawing out a very delicate pocket-handkerchief from his breast-pocket.

"Or safe," put in Mr. Budd.

He was a nervous little man with a nervous laugh.

How he had ever summoned up sufficient courage to propose to his wife (who was a tall, fine woman), and how she had ever been induced to accept him, was a mystery only fit to be ranked among those of Eleusis.

"It will be quite safe enough," said Mrs. Budd, in a clear, ringing voice. "Halford descends and ascends constantly. I have always wished to go, and this will be an excellent opportunity, because, being Christmas-eve, the miners will be in their homes, and we shall have the place all to ourselves."

She being the bride, everyone paid considerable attention to what Mrs. Budd said.

She and her husband were paying their visit to her uncle's house since their honeymoon.

Penruddock regarded Mrs. Budd very thoughtfully, and stroked the back of his head again.

He could not understand why, because he was in the Home Civil Service, and because he happened to be a good-natured fellow, and because he thoroughly disliked adventures of a doubtful and uncomfortable character, why these people should always come down upon him to join in their wild escapades.

They might have let him alone to follow his favorite occupation—doing nothing.

"It's rathah cold, you know," he said, calmly, looking towards the gray, snowy landscape that lay outside the windows. "And I don't b'lieve I have a pair of boots left in the world. I have spoilt four pairs through tramping aftah you people in some of your fearful walks across bogs and fens, and I don't know where."

Lily had not spoken a word hitherto. Now her blue eyes were raised half-shyly to his.

"Oh, do come!" she said, softly.

Penruddock's handsome face changed slightly, very slightly, just sufficiently to show a keen observer that Lily had touched a chord somewhere in his nature that vibrated in response as it would to no other touch.

"Ah! Well, I daresay I shall be ready to go—ah—when you are ready."

"Then let everyone go and get dressed!" exclaimed Illona, setting the example by rushing off at once, while the others followed more quietly.

Halford waited for her in the hall, looking like a young Russian in his fur cap and heavy ulster and hood.

The expression of his face was a trifle gloomy. To tell the truth, Illona was such an unsatisfactory young lady, that she had succeeded in making him thoroughly miserable; and no pique or indifference on his part appeared to produce the slightest effect upon her.

She knew quite well that he loved her, he thought, as he moodily paced the distance between the staircase and the hearth, where a noble fire blazed.

Had he not told her so repeatedly? And yet she would give no answer. She had refused him—no, sometimes her manner was so sweet and so confiding that he was led to imagine she had consented; the next minute she would be colder than snow, and so heartlessly matter-of-fact, that his hopes would be straightway dashed to the ground and he would be left puzzled, angry, indignant, and more in love than ever.

Her moods varied like the colors on a chameleon.

She was a wayward, wilful little thing, and withal the prettiest, most tantalising, and most bewitching damsel that ever drove lovers to distraction.

There was a dash of the foreign element about her, for, as her name implied, she was of Hungarian descent; but in taste, and habit, and education she was purely English, having lived in England all of her life.

She was chattering now upstairs with Lily while she encased her small person in sealskin from head to foot.

"My dear child, Arthur Penruddock is positively growing sentimental—he is, indeed!"

Lily flushed immediately.

"I don't think so. Why?"

She knew why perfectly well; but assurance of the fact was so pleasant to hear from a second person!

"I saw him absolutely change color when you asked him to come with us; and he looked at you—oh!"

Illona gave her head an indescribable shake that had a world of meaning in it.

"Matters will come to a crisis to-day, I am convinced. Imagine Penruddock the immovable descending to the level of ordinary men! My dear Lily, I admire you! Where is—oh! where is my veil?"

She gave an impatient little stamp as she opened a third drawer, without discovering the missing article.

"It is on the table in front of you," observed her friend, quietly. "And won't you put a waterproof over your sealskin? You are sure to get it spoilt if you don't."

"I shall look such a guy!"

"It really doesn't matter. I am wearing my oldest things; just think where we are going!"

"Yes, and just think where Penruddock the Exquisite is going! It really is delicious fun! Nothing on earth would have induced him to move if you had not been there, Lily; I know that. I suppose, when he proposes, you will say 'Yes, love,' in the orthodox manner, and everything will go on as smoothly as possible? I don't know how you manage it."

"I wish you would not take everything for granted in that way," said Lily, half embarrassed. She was the soft, shrinking type of girl—very lovable and simple. "Why don't you say 'Yes,' to Halford? Everybody wonders why you are not engaged. He looks most depressed to-day. I thought you liked him."

"So I do," returned Illona, becoming serious, "but I cannot make myself out. I like him to make love to me, and I like teasing him; but when I feel I ought to be really in earnest, you know, why, I feel so afraid, I can't."

"I don't think it is treating him in a right way. It is wrong to trifle with anybody."

"Listen to the lecturer!"

Illona stood on tiptoe to kiss her friend, for Lily was taller by a head and shoulders.

"My child, I mean to reform. I will be extremely nice to him the next time I see him—I really will. I shall feel perfectly idiotic; but no matter. Now you are not ready, and so I am going; good-bye."

At the foot of the stairs her good resolutions vanished.

Halford was standing there, looking very dignified, apparently unconscious of her proximity. She stopped and contemplated him for a minute.

"Seems to be in a temper," she said, addressing the dog-irons; "finds the cold weather trying, no doubt."

Halford struggled between annoyance and a desire to laugh, and remained very silent.

"Not in a temper, perhaps," she continued, demurely, her eyes dancing with mischief, "but doesn't feel well?"

"I am quite well, thank you, Miss Cornexa," loftily.

"Oh, I thought you did not intend to speak. Will you please button my glove?" sweetly.

She held out an absurdly small hand, and stood quite still while he bent over it. The office would have been a delightful one to him if she had not been so desperately matter-of-fact.

"These are nice gloves, are they not? How much do you think I gave for them?"

"I really could not say."

"Three-and-six; and they are lined with wool, you know—just the thing for today. We shall have a nice walk, shall we not?"

"I don't think I am going," Halford remarked, with a dim idea of revenge. He hoped she would look disappointed.

Her eyebrows were raised most innocently.

"Not going? Oh, you had better come. You will be wanted for the machinery."

"Thank you," he returned, coldly; "one of the men could see to that."

"So he could, and probably would understand it better. You have been out before this morning, of course? I daresay you are tired," sympathizingly.

Halford wanted to shake her, but contented himself with assuming an air of lordly indifference.

Somehow or other he had got the worst of the encounter.

Mrs. Budd made her appearance, followed by a servant bearing a luncheon-basket.

"I thought we should want something to eat down there," she said; "and we shall not be back before dinner-time. Where is William?"

William was her husband. He came out of the library rather suddenly at the sound of her voice, looking very white.

"Do you want me, my dear?" he said, feebly.

"Want you?—of course we do. We want everybody. It is quite time we were off. Where is Mr. Penruddock? Illona, call Lily at once!"

Mr. Gwynn took his son aside while his energetic niece was marshalling her forces; for Mrs. Budd had a faculty for putting herself at the head of all arrangements.

"Take them down the south pit, Halford," he said, "it is the better ventilated of the two. I have been over there myself this morning. Take Griffiths with you, because Lily is the only one who has been down before besides yourself. Dandy Fagen has charge of the engines to-day; I left him there. By the way, send. I can't make the fellow out this week. I am afraid he has been at the drink again."

Mr. Gwynn had an anxious look in his eyes. He was more than half inclined to stop the expedition altogether.

"It will be all right, dad," said Halford, lightly; "I will answer for Dandy. He signed the pledge six months ago; but I will overhaul him certainly, if you wish it."

The walk across the fields to the shaft was glorious. The crisp snow was lying just thickly enough to tell them that it was Christmas-eve, but not so thickly as to render walking unpleasant.

On the horizon, the Cornish hills rose in grandly curving outline, wrapped in white garments, the shadowy winter mists sleeping upon their summits.

Overhead the sky was faintly blue, and the atmosphere was windless, without sound—so still that the falling of a dry leaf from the hedge could be heard as clearly as if a branch had fallen.

There was something exhilarating as well as mysterious in the wonderful winter silence, and Illona had to repress a wild impulse to dance when she first emerged into the air.

"So you have changed your mind," she said to Halford, whom she found at her side; "rather weak, don't you think?"

"You know quite well why I come," he answered, in a low tone, kicking a frozen lump of snow along the ground.

"Yes, I know a coal-pit acts as a kind of magnet to you."

"You know nothing of the sort," angrily.

"Don't I? Oh, very well."

They came to a stile just then that was a little awkward to climb.

The rest had gone on ahead, Penruddock walking with Lily in a pair of Halford's boots, which he declared were two sizes too large.

Halford vaulted the stile, and turned back to help her; on the second rail he made her stand still.

"You are not coming any farther," he said, "until you have spoken properly to me."

Her head was about on a level with his on account of the rail. She looked provokingly pretty and cool.

"You should not attempt to vault stiles in an ulster," she said, drily; "it doesn't look graceful."

"Illona, why will you persist in this child's play? It does not amuse me. It hurts me more than I can tell you. I am tired of it."

"I am tired of standing here."

"You know I love you dearly, and you have told me you don't care for anyone else. Why do you treat me so foolishly? Why won't you be engaged to me? My father wants it; everybody does. Illona, just say 'Yes;' just say that you are fond of me."

Halford could plead very well. He was fine-looking fellow, and his frank blue eyes were most expressive at that moment; but the young lady was quite unmoved.

"This is such a ridiculous position," she said, pathetically; adding indignantly, "I shall say I hate you if you don't let me get over this instant."

"You shall stay here for a twelvemonth if you won't be reasonable," he returned quickly.

She looked across the white waste before her.

The others were disappearing from sight over the brow of a hill.

"My dear Halford," she said, assuming the most coaxing and persuasive voice in the world (she called him by his Christian name, for they had known each other for years), "I do feel so totally unsentimental perched on this rail. I will say all sorts of nice things when a better opportunity. Please let me get over, please do—and I won't be horrid any more."

The piteous entreaty in her eyes was too much for his feelings. He allowed her to descend, and the moment she was on the ground she turned upon him with a shower of comical abuse.

"You are—oh, you are the meanest man in existence. The idea of letting me get down in that meek way, after your high-flown resolutions. I won't walk another step with you," and she ran along the snow until she was constrained to pause for want of breath.

The rest of the party were already in the cage when they reached the head of the shaft.

Griffiths, a head miner, was with them, holding his Davy lamp; he held a second for his young master.

Halford glanced towards the engines, and saw that they were in readiness; but no thought of Dandy Fagen crossed his mind. Illona was full of inquiry concerning the cage, and in answering her questions I think he forgot that there ever existed such an obscure individual as Dandy above the ground or below it.

The signal was given, and they began to descend.

"How long shall we be—he! he!—in the infernal regions?" inquired Mr. Budd, with a ghastly attempt at jocularity.

He was longingly watching the ever-receding platform above his head.

"We are only commencing our journey," laughed his wife; "don't think about returning! Is it not pleasant? Don't you like it?"

"Of course I like it, my dear, or I should not have come; it is delightful! Oh!"—a faint shriek as the cage gave a jerk—"I—I hope the ropes are strong?"

"They are made of wire," said Halford, reassuringly.

"But I've known 'um break a many times," put in Griffiths, sepulchrally.

"These ropes are quite new; there is no fear of that," Halford added, quickly, for the face of the unhappy little bridegroom was green with terror, and Lily had turned pale.

"It is horribly dark, isn't it?" she said, timidly, to Penruddock. "There is hardly any fire-damp in this mine, but we had an explosion in the other about five years ago."

Pretty, shrinking little Lily! Truthfully speaking, she could not endure the mere name of coal-mine.

He was standing close beside her now, and their hands on the rails had somehow (to use an Americanism) got mixed.

"By Jove! this is what a fellow might really call an advenchar!" said Penruddock, slowly. "If you—ah—hold my arm, Miss Gwynn, I fancy you could stand—ah—more steadily."

Strange to say, Lily adopted the suggestion.

Down—down—down! They had reached a level at a depth of about four hundred feet from the surface.

"We get out here," said Halford. "We have descended in perfect safety, you see, Mr. Budd."

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Where is Dandy Fagen?

There, in the furnace-room.

What! that wild, demoniacal creature cowering among the ashes?

Yes, that is Dandy.

The engine works the pumps, which are at rest to-day; but it also winds up the cages; one is at the mouth of the pit now; the other is far down in the black caverns of the earth.

He has to watch the fires—this thing that is more like an animal than a man. His clothes are black and torn, his hair matted, his eyes bloodshot and glaring with a light that is not the light of reason.

He is staring over his shoulder, muttering and cowering as though he sees some terror in the place that fills him with the deadliest fear.

Suddenly he starts to his feet with a horrible yell.

"I have him, I have him—he is in the fire! Now, quick!"

He seizes his huge shovel, and with the strength of a dozen men heaps the coals into the already over-heated furnace. The perspiration drops from him, but he does not pause. His eyes are fixed upon the roaring centre of the fire.

"More than one—two—two demons—green eyes—long claws! Ah! what! you would come out, would you? Back! back! beast! demon! Ah! heap it on, heap it on—more coal—more coal! Bury 'um, down! bury 'um, down! Ha! ha! he's caught fire, his tail's on fire, he's burning, burning, burning!"

The fires roar, the great tongues of flame lick up greedily the fresh fuel—the tall chimneys belch forth volumes of black smoke.

* * * * *

"I call this the most deliciously-novel expedition that I have ever had!" exclaimed Illona.

"I hope you know your way about down here, Halford," said Mrs. Budd, gasping a little for breath. They had all been creeping along a horizontal gallery about four feet high, and had reached a more open space, where they could rest. "I feel completely confused with these levels and—what do you call them?—whim-shafts."

"You can be quite at rest on that head; every part of the mine has its name, and I could find a particular place here as easily as I could find a street in the town."

"Dear me, and do you mean to say that all the air we get come down the hole at the top from which we started?"

Mrs. Budd had a prosaic mind, and liked to be clearly informed on all subjects.

"Good gracious, no," laughed Halford; "we have a special shaft here for ventilation. We could breathe if the hole you mention were choked up."

"Which—ah—I s'ppose it could scarcely be?" inquired Penruddock.

"I've known 'um get choked afore now," said Griffiths, grimly. He was standing quite in the dark, and his deep voice issuing out of the gloom had a gruesome effect. "There was the Hartley accident in '62;

beam of the engine broke, 'undreds killed, my father 'mongst 'um. Then, again, the boilers might burst, and bring down everythink atop of us. I've known 'um burst afore now."

A shiver ran through the party.

"You might as well keep those pleasant experiences of yours to yourself, Griffiths," said Halford, sternly; "the ladies don't like them."

"Oh, we don't mind," said Ilona, merrily; "go on with your horrors, Griffiths; they add a charm to the occasion."

"It is all very interesting here, and I am glad I have seen a mine," said Mrs. Budd's clear voice; "but I think we might as well ascend now. I certainly don't feel inclined to eat anything in such a place. What do you say, William?"

"I should ascend by all means, my love."

The men started to their feet. Lily screamed. Ilona felt her heart stand still.

"An explosion," someone exclaimed.

"I think not," said Alford; "but we had better reconnoitre. Griffiths and I will go. Penruddock, stay here with the rest."

The shaft was blocked, and all means of ascent were entirely cut.

Master and man stared horror-stricken at each other in the pale light of the lamp.

"Good Heavens!" said Halford, hoarsely. "What can have happened?"

"Chimney gone," said Griffiths, laconically, holding the light over the debris. "We're trapped."

Ilona was the first thought that rushed through his mind. How could he go back and tell her the awful truth?

Wait, there was still hope!

"The second shaft, the second shaft, Griffiths, we can get out that way."

The miner shook his head.

"It's out o' order—wants a new cage—master was goin' to have it seen to yesterday, an' put it off, bein' Christmas-time."

They were pitiless words, but Halford sprang up resolutely.

"You may be mistaken; I will go to the shaft and see for myself."

"'Taint no mortal use, sir; it's half a mile fro n 'ere, sir, too; better go an' tell the others what's up fust as last."

There was a rough despair in the man's deep voice, though his face was immovable as iron. It was easy to see the aspect in which he viewed the disaster.

"Tell the others not on any account, until we have tried every chance of escape. The shaft is a forlorn hope, but I will try it."

He went in feverish haste, scarcely liking to confess to himself that he clutched this broken reed, because he had not the courage to go and break the news to the shuddering little group that were awaiting his return.

Ilona was startled at the sight of them as they emerged into the dim light from the utter darkness that lay on left and right. They were strange figures, blackened and begrimed from head to foot, and their voices were all of the Griffiths' order, deep and sepulchral.

They were inclined to hang back, seeing three ladies present, but Mrs. Budd addressed them reassuringly.

"Beg pardon, mum," said the foremost, "we thought as young master wur'ere—seems to be a accident somewheres."

"I am afraid there is," she returned, anxiously. "Mr. Gwynn has gone to ascertain what it is. Do you know at all what has happened?"

"My dear," said Mr. Budd, faintly, "don't enter into conversation with them—it really is not safe; they are the most ferocious-looking——"

The men were conferring together in muttered sentences of consternation.

"Bit o' the roof fell in?"

"Maybe. Lord have mercy on us, if 't has!"

There was a silence among the men; some of them shuffled their feet uneasily.

"It means diggin' us out; and if they can't do that—starvation, mum!" said the miner who had just addressed her.

"Here is Halford."

He was standing amongst them, white and haggard.

"I hope you bring us good news," said Mrs. Budd, bravely. "Can we ascend at once?"

Her hands touched his arm.

"We cannot get out?" she whispered.

"No, my darling."

And he caught her in his arms in time to save her falling to the ground.

Griffiths was explaining the situation they were in a vault-like tone that carried little comfort with it. The bare, hard truth was told. One shaft was blocked, the other useless they were immured, fathoms down from the light of the sun, in a prison that might prove a living tomb.

The first few moments that followed this revelation were very terrible.

There was a death-like silence for the most part; only Penruddock—true to himself even in peril so extreme—murmured, "By Jove!" with the most awe-stricken intonation he had ever used in his life.

Mrs. Budd covered her face with her hands. The little bridegroom whimpered in a corner like a child.

"Shall we never be able to know what they are doing outside?" Ilona asked at last. "Is there absolutely no communication whatever?"

She was not prepared for Halford's sudden start and the light that rushed over him.

"Why, Griffiths, what idiots we have been—we have forgotten the telephone! it is laid to this very spot."

The place where they were was the centre of the mine, and from that point to Mr. Gwynn's private room at the Grange a telephone was carried that was in frequent use.

There was a subdued cheer among the men as he found the mouthpiece and raised it to his lips, a minute of breathless expectation, followed by a groan of bitter disappointment, as they saw him drop it despairingly from his fingers, with the one low exclamation:

"Broken!"

That minute's hope was the cruellest blow of all, for now they knew that nothing was left to them but to wait—to wait in helpless inactivity—for longer than they dared think.

When the first panic was over, they strove to reassure each other by suggesting methods of release, and by relating stories of similar imprisonments that had ended happily; while all the time each one felt a dull foreboding of the worst that he would not confess to his neighbor.

It was one o'clock when the chimney had fallen; at five o'clock Mrs. Budd opened the luncheon-basket. She had been afraid to suggest food until a sensation of hunger reminded her that they had eaten nothing since nine A.M.

The miners had bread and cheese in their pockets, which they nibbled from time to time. The basket contained a game-pie, some rolls and butter, a bottle of wine and one of milk. Not much to be divided among six people.

"Better nick' it go as far as 'twill," Griffiths observed, gloomily. He was the only person who did not attempt to hide the real state of his feelings. "I've known 'um a couple o' days gettin' folks out."

The effect of this reflection was to bring forth a general declaration of lack of appetite from the rest, and the game-pie was only half consumed. Halford and Penruddock, each thinking privately of the womenkind, ate less than anyone.

Mr. Budd was not troubled by such chivalrous sentiments, and surreptitiously snatched a roll when no one was looking, and concealed it behind him.

The evening wore on, and the lamps burnt lower and lower.

"We should all be in the drawing-room now, after dinner," Ilona said, with a little quiver in her voice; "we were going to tell each other's fortunes, you know."

She and Halford were standing together in a black recess of the sort of cavern where they were, and she spoke in a low tone that the others could not hear.

"We shall remember this Christmas-eve, shall we not?" he answered, trying to speak lightly.

"Are they trying to dig us out?"

"Hardly. It would want machinery to raise the mass of brickwork that has choked the shaft!"

"Don't you think it has been gradually growing very hot, Halford? I can hardly breathe."

"That must be imagined, darling; we have as much air as we had before, thank Heaven!"

"You don't think we shall be stifled, then?" faintly.

"No, most certainly not." The arm that was round her waist drew her closer as he spoke; and after a minute, he added: "You don't mind my holding you like this, do you, Ilona?"

The fact had suddenly struck him that he had unconsciously adopted the position of an accepted lover ever since the terrible discovery, and for the first time in her life she had offered no opposition.

She nestled closer still to him in the darkness.

The remembrance of the snowy field and the wooden rail up before her, and the words she had uttered thoughtlessly, "I will say all sorts of nice things to you when a better opportunity comes."

This was the opportunity she had waited for—this dark prison in the depths of the earth, and the possibility of a lingering death looking them coldly in the face.

"Do you remember the stile?" she whispered.

"Yes; I remember it."

"Can you forgive me for what I said? I didn't mean to hurt you."

His answer was a silent caress that was more eloquent than words.

Midnight came, solemn and still. They knew the stars were shining far away; but evening, or midnight, or morning were all alike to them.

They had almost finished the contents of the luncheon-basket. They did not like to eat all, thought they were hungry, poor things!

Mr. Budd's peevish complaints sounded from time to time. He had broken his watch-glass—he had grazed his shin in altering his position—he was cramped—he was cold—he was tired. At times a bubble of fretful wrath rose to the surface of his lamentations.

Lily was sitting on the ground, her golden head dropped wearily, for she was utterly worn out.

Penruddock was near her. He was very fond of her in his calm fashion, and he had hoped to tell so some day.

The fair, drooping head appealed pathetically to him; he bent down to her with a dim notion of comforting her in some way.

"Are you—are you very tired?" he said, gently.

She tried to look up bravely and smile.

"No, not very tired."

And then something in his eyes overcame her and she dropped her head in her hands and burst into tears.

They were not noisy tears; only a subdued weeping that no one noticed except Penruddock, for the rest were absorbed each one in his own melancholy thoughts. He had taken her in his arms the next minute; the thin partition of uncertainty and restraint swept away by her helplessness and the terrible presence of danger.

"I love you, Lily; I did not think I should tell you so here. I thought—but you had better know it now—because——"

"I know—I understand!" she interrupted, hurriedly.

He played with the soft hair that lay upon his shoulder, and his broad chest heaved convulsively once—only once.

"If ever we—we—get out from here, Lily, you will marry me, won't you?"

"Yes."

Four o'clock a.m.

"Christmas morning," said Mrs. Budd, brightly. Her cheerfulness and courage were wonderful. "Are we too tired to sing a Christmas hymn? One can hear us, you know, even here."

Without waiting for an answer, she led them off in a clear, steady voice:

"'Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!'"

The deep voices of the miners chimed in one after another.

Griffiths' powerful frame was dimly outlined against the wall behind him; he had scarcely spoken a word for hours, but as the last note echoed away Mrs. Budd saw him dash his rough hand across his eyes, and caught two smothered words:

"My chil'dern!"

Ilona's thoughts soared up to the earth.

Would she never see the cold, bright, beautiful winter-world again? Never see the sun! A wild, intense longing came over her for light—free light, and a breath of fresh air. Closing her eyes, she breathed an agonized prayer that she might die in the dark!

It seemed to her that they had been buried for days.

She thought of the gay mornings at the Grange. It seemed so long ago—all the brightness of it, the life, the color, the pleasant sound and sensation. It was like a dream; and she had awaked to find herself in a dark, narrow grave, and "the earth with her bars" was about her for ever.

"Halford!" she whispered.

"Yes, dear."

"I seem to know now. They will never get us out!"

His arm was under her head: she touched it with her lips.

"Whatever happens, you won't leave me, Halford, will you—not for one minute?"

"Not for one second my own; if we die we shall die together."

"I shall go first," said she dreamily. "I am a girl, and I never was very strong. You will hold out much longer than I shall; but you will let me stay in your arms, Halford, even when I am dead, will you not?"

"My darling, don't talk like this!" he cried, desperately.

"Yes, I must say it, I have been thinking of it so long; perhaps they will come and save you at last, and you will live. If you do live, Halford, if you do—don't—don't—forget me very soon." Her voice failed with a half sob. "Remember that I told you I loved you when I died."

She clung to him despairingly, her whole frame shuddering.

After a time, however, the wild agony passed, and she lay still; and when she spoke again her voice was steady:

"I was weak and faithless, Halford dear; I am braver now. You asked me to let you kiss me once. When was it? Oh, long ago, and I refused. Do you remember? Will you forget it, and kiss me now—now, Halford, because I think—I think I am fainting?"

As his lips touched hers, passionately, sorrowfully, he thought she had fainted; but it was a half-swoon of exhaustion; and through it, as through mists and dream, she caught the sound of a faint, low whistle—a thin, ghostly sound, like a spirit calling to them from another world.

When she came to full consciousness she knew that the telephone was speaking. From clear light and air into the black abysses of the earth the strange, unearthly voice came:

"Are you all there?"

"Yes—yes."

"Go to the bottom of the second shaft; cage is ready."

Saved! Ah, the blessed news! Fresh life and strength poured into their cramped limbs.

Half an hour from the time the message reached them they were standing at the pit's mouth, cold, weary, dirty, famished, but happy—the centre of an eager, surging, clamoring crowd.

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Gwynn, clasping Lily in his arms, "you are all safe; it has been a terrible time of suspense for everyone; but you are here, and we shall have a merry Christmas after all."

The cheering throngs parted to left and right to allow the carriages to approach which were waiting to take the party to the Grange. Indeed, the excited pit-men, who had been toiling all through the night to clear away the ruins that hid the broken telephone wire, would have carried Halford on their shoulders.

There is no need to remark that two engagements were publicly announced before very long and Mr. Gwynn, looking at Penruddock and Ilona, was wont to observe that eventful Christmastide; though he had lost a tall chimney he had gained a tall son-in-law and a very pretty daughter.

Let every dawn of morning be to you as the beginning of life and every setting sun to you as its close; then let every one of these short lives leave its rare record of some kindly thing done for others, some goodly strength or knowledge gained for yourselves.

Scientific and Useful.

HOARSENESS.—Bake a lemon or sour orange for twenty minutes in a moderate oven, then open it at one end and dig out the inside, and sweeten it with sugar or molasses, and eat. This will cure hoarseness and also remove pressure from the lungs.

LEATHER GOODS.—Leather goods exposed in apartments where gas is used rapidly become rotten. This is understood to be due to the combustion of the bisulphide of carbon contained in the gas and the consequent oxidation into sulphuric acid. Russia and calf appear to suffer most and morocco least, as tested by the binding of books.

GOLD FROM WHEAT.—Two processes have been patented by a modern alchemist for extracting gold from the grain and the straw of wheat. At present no indications have been given of the profitable results, and it is possible that the discovery may be no more valuable than that relating to the extraction of silver from sea water. In other words the process may be possible, but not expedient.

LEAD-HEADED NAIL.—An improved lead-headed nail for use in putting on corrugated iron roofs has made its appearance in the English market. The shank of the nail is round and sufficiently sharp at the point to enter the wood readily, and may be driven home in the usual way. The head flattens under the blows of the hammer, or a punch may be used which will give it a conical head. The lead of the head comes in contact with the sheet iron in such a way as to lessen the chance of leaking.

SPEECH.—There has recently been devised an instrument called by some the "palate-myograph," by means of which the various phonetic sounds employed in spoken language may be graphically represented by a series of curved lines registered on white paper covered with soot. From the researches that have thus far been made with this instrument, it would appear that many of the sounds generally conceived to be produced by the direct action of the lips, teeth, or tongue, are in reality the result of palatal action.

OXALIC ACID.—A solution of oxalic acid has been used for removing ink stains from cotton, linen, or the fingers; but it is attended with the danger of injuring textiles and the skin. A much safer and better treatment of ink or rust stains consists in the application of two parts of powdered cream of tartar and one part of finely powdered oxalic acid. Shake up the ingredients well together and apply the powder with a dry rag to the dampened stain. When the spot has disappeared the part should be very well washed.

Farm and Garden.

THE BLACKSMITH.—If your blacksmith insists upon burning your horses' feet in order to make the shoes fit, hunt another farrier at once.

CLOVER.—Clover contains more water than many other grasses, and consequently requires a longer time for curing properly. It is also more easily injured by rains than other grasses, and should, therefore, be protected with covers when in cocks, in case of an emergency.

PLANTS.—Gardens have generally an excess of course barnyard manure and a deficiency of potash and phosphates. Many garden plants, especially turnips and cabbage, will be greatly helped in such gardens by substituting an application of phosphate for the usual spring dressing of stable manure.

SEEDS OF WEEDS.—An important part of the farmer's business is to make manure from as cheap materials as possible. Everything that is capable of being converted into manure should be added to the heap, but the manure should thoroughly decompose in order to destroy the seeds of weeds and other undesirable plants.

DRIED FRUITS.—When dried fruits or other articles are very carefully inclosed in strong paper bags, moths, millers or worms cannot get into them. If not entirely free from them or their eggs, the fruit should be first heated in an oven as hot as it can be without injuring it before putting it bags so as to kill the eggs or germs of insect or plant life.

THE PASTURE.—Pastures that have become so thoroughly run out and overrun by briers and bushes as not to be worth fencing for cattle may be given over to the sheep with advantage. Sheep eat many plants that would not be noticed by other stock, and prevent such from growing and taking possession of the pasture to the detriment of valuable grasses. As the droppings from sheep are also valuable, they partially restore the land and render it suitable for desirable crops.

A KICKING HORSE.—Parties who are troubled with kicking horses may read the following with profit: An old wheat sack filled with hay was suspended by a rope from the ceiling, so that the sack hung just at the heels of a vicious horse as he stood in his stall. When the sack was first placed in position the kicking equine let fly both feet at it as soon as it touched him, but after 10 or 20 minutes of that kind of work he came to the conclusion that the sack would return as often as he struck it, and he finally gave up trying to "knock it out." This same horse, which has a reputation as a kicker, can now be hitched to any vehicle and he will not kick at anything that happens to strike his heels.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST
FOUNDED, A.D. 1821

PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 8, 1885.

Purity, Progress, Pleasure and Permanence are conspicuously inefaceable features written by the finger of Time on the venerable record of this paper. To the thousands who have drawn many of their noblest thoughts and much of their sweetest enjoyment from its familiar columns, in the two generations covering its history, renewed assurances of devotion to their gratification and improvement are superfluous. THE SATURDAY EVENING POST exists solely to serve the best interests and promote the truest pleasures of its patrons and readers. It hopes to constantly deserve the unswerving approval of its great army of old and new friends. It aspires to no higher ambition. To accomplish this, nothing shall impede the way. The best productions of the noblest thinkers and the finest writers will fill its columns, and the unwearied energies of the most careful editors shall be continuously devoted to its preparation. Nothing impure or debasing will be permitted to desile its pages nor make them an unworthy visitor to any home. The most Graphic Narrations, Instructive Sketches, Fascinating Stories, Important Biographical Essays, Striking Events, Best Historical Descriptions, Latest Scientific Discoveries, and other attractive features adapted to every portion of the family circle, will appear from week to week, while the Domestic, Social, Fashion and Correspondence Departments will be maintained at the highest possible standard of excellence. Its sole aim is to furnish its subscribers with an economical and never-failing supply of happiness and instruction, which shall be as necessary to their existence as the air they breathe. While myriads of silken threads in the web of memory stretch far back in the history of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, it will never rest on past laurels, but keep fully abreast of all genuine progress in the spirit of the age in which the present generation lives. It earnestly seeks and highly appreciates the favor and friendship of the pure and good everywhere, but desires no affiliation with, nor characteristic approval from, their opposites.

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Hope and Its Foundations.

It is usual for those who "build castles in the air," to take a great deal for granted, and it is frequently the case when these prospects are blasted, that they begin to notice the force of the old proverb, "not to count one's chickens before they are hatched." Time has repeatedly shown that the counting of unhatched chickens leads to disastrous results. We make so very sure of their being safely brought into the world, that we unconsciously give up paying any further attention to the matter, and suppose that all will be as we desire it. Everyone has heard of the unfortunate Alnaschar—how he invested the whole of his little fortune in a basket of glassware, by the sale of which, and of future baskets of glassware, mighty things were to be done; and how, absorbed in the contemplation of his future greatness, he gave no thought to the selling of his glass, but, in the excitement of his day dream, gave his basket a kick, and shattered it into a thousand atoms—not a basket of jugs and tumblers merely, but a fine house, horses, carriages, servants, and a wife of surpassing beauty. Yes; it does not do to make too sure of Madame Fortune. She behaves well, allows the chickens to come out in due course, four or five times out of six; but just when you begin to think that you may depend on the old hen doing her duty once more, lo! the eggs are addled, or they are left to get cold, or the rats, or the cat, or some other instrument of fate, interposes, and Madame Fortune, as it were, grins in your face. Happy he who can "grin and bear it;" who can keep his thoughts from turning too often to the lost brood, and go on setting another hen as soon as may be. If the proverb means no more than that we must not act as if our chickens were hatched, or allow the pleasure of hope to dull the edge of action, no man can quarrel with it; but if it is taken literally, we maintain that it is what Charles Lamb said of the saying, "Enough is as good as a feast"—that it is a miserable, starved, cold-shoulder-of-mutton kind of proverb. There are some good people who seem unable or afraid to entertain a hearty hope for any good thing. At the best, they indulge in a wish and a sigh. They seem to have a sort of a superstitious dread of expecting anything, lest the very expecting it should drive it from them. "Blessed is he who expecteth little," is one of their sayings. This mood of feeling is surely a little superstitious; and it must detract, like an over-confidence of success, from the power of one's efforts. Not only would they not count their chickens as really theirs till they are hatched, but they will hardly be sure of them till they are carried to market, and sold and paid for. Even then they will tell you the money might be stolen. At that rate, one can hardly be sure of having enjoyment out of anything under the sun; for the present moment is so short, so fleeting, that if it is not eked out by a bit of the future, we have hardly time to say, "Now I am happy," before the change comes. It is surely wise to learn to hope; yet be not too much cast down by disappointment. Surely he would be a fool who would shut Pandora up in her box again, and despise her bright, kindly presence, because she was only Hope, not fulfilment. The world in which unhatched chickens and other unsubstantial good things are enjoyed, may be but a frail and fleeting thing; yet it has its uses. Life would be very dreary if it were not for air-built castles; and we may be pretty sure that if they did not serve some useful end, we should not have had the power of building them. Only, these airy structures are found to be very unsuitable as places of permanent abode.

The Great and Little.

There are a great many people in the world who want to be doing great things. Their duties are so trivial, they tell you, anybody can do them; and so they complain, think themselves cut out for something better, lose their happiness, and with unfortunate frequency descend. For such people no better advice can be given than this: "Take care of the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves." "Despise not the day of small things." Do the work that is nearest you, and if you do that well, you will be taking care of the pennies; and, depend upon it, these will lead to dollars—these trivial duties will lead to greater—if there be any difference in this respect between duties. It has been said, and with great truth, that genius is a painstaking in small things—is, in other words, the taking care of pennies. What was Sir Isaac Newton's apple that he saw fall from a tree in the garden? It was a penny. So familiar a thing as a falling apple was not too familiar for him to despise. He took care of it, he nurtured it, and he brooded over it, and it led him on to the grandest discovery in physical science. It led him on to the dollars, to the law of gravitation, which, again, has given us our astronomy, our navigation, our commerce, and through that the intercourse that foreign nations now enjoy. Then there is the steam engine; the penny in this case is a youth watching the steam issuing from his mother's tea-kettle. From the observations he makes, he is led to a discovery that has revolutionized society. Instances of a similar kind will doubtless occur to the reader, where great discoveries have emanated from regard being had to the smallest matters—from regard being had to the pennies. Great things are made up of small, and if we neglect the small things, we shall assuredly find that there will be no great things for us to attend to. On a close investigation, it will be found that everything that has yet been accomplished, has been done through a close attention to the pennies. One of our best Greek scholars of the present day was a herd boy. He used to be pretty well all day amongst his cows. He had no spare time, and no opportunity at night for learning. He was, however, never without a book in his pocket, more especially a grammar, which he would glance at every now and then, read a sentence out of, and, putting the book back in his pocket, repeat the sentence until he had thoroughly mastered it. That boy is now a professor in one of our universities, and has written the best Greek grammar that has yet been published. In this case the pennies were well taken care of, for every opportunity, every little moment, was devoted to learning. How much better opportunities than these do people continually throw away! Harvey gives a fine illustration of our proverb in his "Meditations Amongst the Tombs." He is trying to give his readers an idea of eternity, and he asks us to picture to our minds sand-hills of the greatest magnitude that we can conceive. Then, says he, imagine a little bird coming to these sand-hills once every thousand years, and taking away from these hills one small grain of sand; let one small grain of sand be taken away in every thousand years, and in eternity these hills would be removed! What a despicable thing a grain of sand is—what a penny that is to take care of! Yet the greatest changes that take place upon our globe are effected through the displacement of one grain after another. Geologists tell us that it is in this way that rocks are disintegrated, that caves and ravines are made, that islands—in fact, continents—because submerged, and that new islands and continents appear.

EACH life is made up of many parts. Some appear to us of great importance, others of comparative insignificance; to the one we acknowledge allegiance, the others we feel at liberty to attend to or neglect at our pleasure. There is not only what we call the business of life, but also its recreations; there are not only the duties we owe to the family, but also duties to society, to State, to humanity; there is not only the body to keep healthy, but the mind to keep active—not only the heart to keep pure and the disposition to keep sweet, but there are manners to cultivate and the courtesies of life to observe. Some are conscientious about one of these, some about another; very few recognize them all as binding and obligatory. To brand any of these claims with the name of frivolity, or to neglect them as insignificant, is only to show a narrow and illiberal and one-sided mind, unable to appreciate the complex nature of life.

NATURE resents all attempts to hurry her processes, and, even when they seem to be successful with bright and forward children, it is often at the cost of maturer and more important growth. Efforts to reform character frequently fail from the same cause. The changes which we wish to produce are too great to be suddenly effected. They can come about only by small instalments. If we cannot be content to lead men and women upwards gently and continuously, we may as well give up the office of reformer. On the other hand, those who are always ready to oppose changes, are actually fighting against nature. The law of variation, seen in every tree that puts out a new twig, in every race of animals that advances a step in organization, in every human being who climbs the road to excellence in any direction, is the underlying law of all improvement and the foundation of the most real happiness that is ever enjoyed.

NEITHER learning, nor philosophy, nor advantages of any kind, hold a monopoly of correct judgment as to the right and wrong of the every-day affairs of life. He who, with ordinary intelligence and a sincere desire to do right, trusts to his own instinctive ideas of what is right, is far more likely to decide wisely and to act justly than one who uses his brains to weave subtle arguments, to find specious excuses, evasions, and contradictions, or to discover some supposed conflict of duties which shakes his previous firm convictions.

OUR happiness as thinking beings must depend on our being content to accept only partial knowledge, even in those matters which chiefly concern us. Our whole happiness and power of energetic action depend upon our being able to breathe and live in the cloud, content to see it opening here and closing there, rejoicing to catch through its thinnest films glimpses of stable and substantial things.

The World's Happenings.

Forty thousand masons and bodmen in Berlin are out of work.

Female dentists are growing numerous and popular in Germany.

A regiment of bicycles is the latest innovation in the German army.

A colt eighteen inches high is attracting attention in Meriden, Conn.

Deaf mutes will hold a convention in Petersborough, N. H., in October.

One of the New York papers has facilities for printing 28 papers per second.

A law went into effect in Ohio last month requiring all wages to be paid weekly in cash.

Smith is the name of fourteen of a class of seventeen pupils in a school at Bronson, Fla.

A thirteen-year-old Pitusburg girl has eloped with a salesman whom she knew but half an hour.

Five prisoners let themselves out of the York county, Pa., jail, a day or two ago, with a wooden key.

The Sandwich Islanders have a base-ball league, the champion club of which is the Oceanic, of Honolulu.

A whistling match, in which the winner held out for two and a half hours, was recently held in Pittsburg.

Paulding county, Ga., has a 16-year-old youth who measures seven feet in height and weighs but 90 pounds.

The British Bible Society issued a New Testament at two cents a copy. In nine months 950,000 have been sold.

The postoffice safe at Cleburne, Texas, was robbed by a thief while the postmaster was looking at a circus procession.

A learned professor estimates that during one season over 62,000 gallons of blood are drawn from humanity by mosquitoes.

A Chicago man collects the brains of slaughtered cattle and sells them to epicures throughout the country at $2 a dozen.

No machine of travel that man ever invented can equal the speed of wild fowl. The canvas-back duck flies two miles a minute.

"One High Jene and Fizzeoligy" was a North Carolina school teacher's requisition for a new manual just published by the State.

A small colored boy in Basseterre, West Indies, is reported to have two teeth growing out of his nostrils, at the side of the bony septum.

A book is said to be in process of publication entitled: "The First Families of the United States," wealth being the determining consideration.

A lively controversy on the question, "Is it wise to take down front yard fences?" is going on between correspondents of the Athol, Mass., papers.

A physician says that drinking cold water or beer after having eaten raw fruits, is a direct challenge to cholera which no person, however healthy, can afford to risk.

At one time during the revolutionary war the currency of the country had so far depreciated that a barrel of flour was worth $1,575, and John Adams paid $1,500 for a suit of clothes and a hat.

To prevent their children from getting lost, the heads of several families sojourning at Asbury Park have adopted the use of linen tags, on which the name and address are printed or embroidered.

An Atlanta, Ga., murderer, who several years ago was sentenced to the chain gang for life, but has since been pardoned, now threatens to sue the State of Georgia for breaking down his health while imprisoned.

It is contemplated to use the electric light in Algiers for night work during harvest time, in order to escape the heat, which is almost murderous for Europeans, and is an obstacle to their carrying on agricultural work.

A resident of Augusta, Me., waxed so wroth at the spectacle of the British sparrows destroying his cherries, that he bombarded them with all the missiles on which he could lay his hands, including his false teeth.

In lieu of water, a teamster who was driving a beer wagon near Arlington, N. J., recently, discovering a house on fire, quickly knocked in the heads of several barrels and extinguished the flames with the beverage.

Some railways are adopting an ingenious device by which the weight of an approaching train raises the gates at road and street crossings. After the train has passed, the gates fall again by their own weight to allow traffic to proceed.

Street-car routes in Scotch cities are laid off in districts, the fare within each being a penny. The passenger pays a penny on entering, and, as each new district is reached, the conductor collects another penny. The system is found to encourage short rides, the most profitable to the companies.

A young man who was married four weeks ago, and kept himself in a condition of semi-drunkenness in the interval, reached a Brooklyn police court a few days ago. His explanation was that he discovered that his wife had a wooden leg, and he sought to drown his grief and disappointment in drink.

David Gamble, a wealthy and benevolent farmer of Emmettsburg, Md., who has nightly slept in his own coffin since he found his young wife dead by his side, forty years ago, after they had returned from a ball, was found dead the other morning in his coffin-bed, and will be buried just as he was found.

Signs in Cuba being taxed five cents a letter, emblems are mostly in vogue there, it is said, as business advertisements at stores, etc., with here and there a daub of paint across the lettering of a worded sign, resulting in an obliteration that exempts it from the tax, but which leaves the sign decipherable.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

BY J. CHAMBERS.

A child lay dying; but still her brow was clear.
Sad faces drooped around, but on her own
No shadow darkened. Was the end unknown
To her young heart? And struck with sudden fear
Her mother whispered, "thou wilt soon be gone;
But oh, my lamb will not be left alone:
Thou art in death's dark vale, but He is near."

The child looked wondering in her mother's face,
"I am in no dark vale," she said, and smiled.
"I see the light; it is not dark at all!"
Love, thou didst light death's valley for that child;
And to the child-like soul that trusts thy grace,
Thus will thou come when death's dark shadows fall.

A Guiltless Sinner.

BY E. M. DAVY.

TOWARDS three o'clock, on a certain gloomy afternoon in November, Mr. Arthur Lee sat at work in his private office. He was twenty-eight years of age, handsome, wealthy, and a bachelor.

He had shown hitherto no more disposition of entering the matrimonial state than he had of relinquishing the business habits acquired from his father. Business seemed to be with him—as with his departed parent—the ruling passion of his life.

He was of a reserved disposition, averse to society, especially that of women; and might have remained a bachelor to the end of his days, but for a circumstance which happened on this particular November day.

"A lady, sir," announced the office-boy, at the same time laying a visiting card upon the desk.

"Mrs. de Winton," was engraved upon the card; but the name was unknown to Mr. Lee. He intimated that the lady should be admitted. Whereupon, a tall and graceful woman swept into the office, the frou-frou of whose sable-trimmed velvet draperies made soft unknown music in the place; and the faint scent of some sweet and subtle essence entering with her seemed to pervade the air. Mr. Lee rose and bowed; intuitively he knew this woman to be of a different world from that of his experience.

"How glad I am to see you—to know you!" So speaking, she held out a delicately-gloved hand, with which she pressed his warmly. "Mr. Lee, it is impossible for me to regard you as a stranger, though this is our first meeting. I—I—know—your father!"

Here she sighed softly, as at some half-pleasing, half-sad remembrance; then taking a tiny handkerchief from her muff, and passing it lightly and swiftly across her eyes, she sank gracefully into the chair offered. While doing so she flashed a sudden keen and furtive look at the young man.

There was a short pause. Then he asked quite calmly:

"Can I be of any service to you, Mrs. de Winton? I do not recollect ever hearing my father speak of you."

"Sentiment won't do—he is too like his father," thought this astute woman of the world. She continued on a different tack: "Mr. Lee, I will explain as rapidly as I can why I have sought you. The fact is, I have led a roving life for very many years, and am wearied of foreign travel and hotels. I wish to settle down in some English town or city as my home. Yesterday only I arrived at the Station Hotel here, and the idea—inspiration—whim—call it what you will—seized me to make this town my abiding-place; the only drawback being that I did not know a soul in it. Then remembering that it was your father's native place, I——"

"May I ask how you became acquainted with my father?" interrupted Mr. Arthur Lee.

"Twenty years ago I met him at the Old Hall Hotel at Buxton. We saw much of each other then; he was in ill-health, and spoke continually to me of you, his only child. A great trouble fell on me at that time. I asked his help; and his kindness—" she hesitated, after emphasizing the word in a peculiar way—"his kindness made on me an impression that never can be effaced. Mr. Lee, I never forget a kindness; I never forgive an injury. But let that pass. Some years later I married General de Winton. He barely lived twelve months."

Again she passed her lace handkerchief lightly across her eyes; then after another pause, in a lighter tone continued:

"Now what I want you, my dear Mr. Lee, to do for me is this: Put me into communication with a house-agent, an upholsterer and decorator, a banker, and such tradespeople generally as you can recommend. It will not be troubling you too much, will it? No? As to my—means"—she changed her tone to one of fashionable languor, "I will leave these papers with you; they will show you I am not—poor. Will you kindly look them over? And—Mr. Lee—might I ask you to call upon me at my hotel to-night, after you have perused them?"

To both of these requests Arthur Lee assented in the matter-of-fact manner habitual to him. Smiling and offering a gracious apology for having detained him so long in business hours, the lady departed, Mr. Lee, in duty bound, with calm politeness accompanying her to the door.

He then returned to his desk, and continued his interrupted work of considering appeals from tenants for repairs, improvements, and renewals of leases, which his occupation as land agent to the Duke of Wearshire entailed on him. At four o'clock as usual he left the office.

At eight o'clock he presented himself at the Station Hotel, enquired for Mrs. de Winton, and was shown to a private sitting-room by a waiter.

At first it occured to him there must be some mistake. He had entered noiselessly, unannounced, and was almost startled out of his usual equanimity by what he heard and saw.

"Love me, Too-too! Kiss me, Too-too!" a fresh young voice was singing gaily. The owner of it—a girl of apparently some seventeen summers—dressed in a coquettish robe de chambre, her long nut-brown hair hanging in thick ripples far below her waist—stood immediately beneath the chandelier. Her lovely face was thrown back and turned towards one shoulder, on which was perched, nestling amongst her hair, a small white cockatoo.

The girl was far too pleasantly occupied to notice the stranger's entrance. She kept repeating the above words as a sort of refrain, pursing her pretty rosy lips together and kissing the bird; which fluttered its wings, and made as though it returned her kisses, cooing softly.

The light from above fell upon her, and a prettier picture could scarcely be imagined. "Kiss me, Too-too! Love me, Too-too!" sang the fresh sweet voice.

Arthur Lee stood fascinated—spell-bound. His senses drank in the scene with all its bearings as a poet or a painter might have done, though he was neither.

All at once she seemed conscious of another presence in the room, and raising a pair of the sweetest, frankest eyes that ever met his own—blue-grey they were, veiled by curved dark lashes—she turned with careless grace, and held out her hand.

"Ah, you are Mr. Lee—my mother's friend, whom she expected? I will call her——"

"No," he said, "not yet." And unconsciously he retained, longer than etiquette demanded, the hand she had placed in his.

His eyes then wandered from her face to the bird upon her shoulder. "What a strange name to call your cockatoo. What does it mean?"

"Oh, don't you know? Isn't he altogether a too lovely bird—what could I call him but—Too-too?" she answered, laughing. "Are you fond of birds?" she continued. "But what a silly question! I might as well ask you do you like people. There must be loveable and hateable among both. I have not a friend in England, Mr. Lee, but Too-too. I have just come from a convent in France, where most of my life has been spent. Too-too was a sailor's bird as we crossed the channel; when we landed he would not leave me, so I bought him. I am teaching him to love me. Do you think he will?"

"Who or what could not love you?" thought Mr. Lee, as fairly bewitched at first sight by this sweet unconscious creature as ever was mortal man before by woman-kind.

"Don't you think he may—in time?" she inquired deprecatingly.

"I am sure of it. He must. And your mother—how she——" must idolise you, he would have said; but broke off, ashamed of the significance of his words.

There was, however, nothing but candor in the girl's reply.

"Mamma? Oh, we are almost strangers to each other. You see we are only beginning to be acquainted. I can't sing to her and ask her to love me as I can Too-too! I have been nearly all my life in a convent, while my mother has enjoyed a roving life in continental cities. At least, I suppose she has enjoyed it, as she chose it; though I should much prefer to stay in one place—Oh, Too-too! Are you tired of me? Is it that you also—you—like change?"

The fickle bird, finding itself unnoticed for the moment, had run down and perched itself on Arthur's hand, whence it walked solemnly until it reached his shoulder.

"But that is too unkind. Too-too, Too-too, kiss me, love me!"

And singing again softly the old refrain she approached her lips close to the bird; they were within an inch of Arthur's. He knew it; and trembled with an emotion he had never felt before.

Another moment, and he would have yielded to the wild passion with which he was suddenly possessed; he could have pressed his lips to those that advanced to kiss the bird—when the folding doors which he had before seen but scarcely noticed, opened, and Mrs. de Winton entered.

"Leila! you here! In such a guise, and with that wretched bird!"—the pretty creature had fluttered back to its mistress. Mr. Lee, what must you think? And Leila, my love, your hair——"

"I thought no harm, mother, and am sure Mr. Lee saw none. You ordered Louise to brush my hair, and let it hang——"

"Sweet child, good-night. "Mr. Lee and I have business together."

Thus dismissed, the girl kissed her mother on both cheeks—French way—and glancing shyly at Arthur, bent her head, smiling half-regretfully, it seemed, then disappeared through the folding doors.

To Arthur Lee it was as though the dark curtain had descended on the most beautiful play he had ever witnessed. The lights were out, and to his mental vision darkness alone was visible.

Mrs. de Winton watched him as he continued looking at the closed doors, a furtive smile upon her lips. Then seating herself asked, so suddenly as effectually to rouse him from his reverie:

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Lee? Were the papers satisfactory?"

"I think they appear to be so," he said, as he obeyed her, and tried to concentrate his thoughts.

"Have you been so kind as to make out the list I asked for?"

He selected a paper from the rest and gave it to her.

"A thousand thanks. To-morrow, quite early, I shall call upon the house agent. Now tell me about yourself."

"Myself? I know of nothing about myself that can be of any interest to you, Mrs. de Winton," he answered gravely.

"Everything concerning your father's son must interest me. They tell me you succeeded to your father's berth—you are agent to the Duke of Wearshire?"

"I am."

"What a thousand pities your father did not leave enough to make you independent!" she exclaimed, watching his countenance closely. "I conclude the world—as it usually does in such cases—greatly exaggerated his wealth."

"Why should you come to this conclusion?"

"Pardon me—because you still continue in business."

"That is no reason. I was brought up to despise an idle life."

"Well, I suppose I must look upon you as, comparatively speaking, a poor man. Had the world's report been a true one, and you rich, of course you would have acted very differently."

"How?" And as he spoke one of those rare smiles that occasionally lit up his face, broke over it like a sun-ray.

"You would have thrown up the duke's agency and turned county gentleman. As you continue to hold it, I conclude you cannot afford to live without it. I am only sorry, Mr. Lee, that fortune has not dealt better with you."

"Supposing I confessed to you——"

"Confess nothing to me. I hate talking of ways and means. If you have only sufficient for your wants as a bachelor, you are the safer from fortune-hunters. By-the-by, may I come and see you at your house to-morrow? What is the address? Elyston Place? Ah, thanks. I will look in about four o'clock, when I have done my house-hunting. You shall give me a cosy cup of tea in your bachelor quarters. I can dispose somehow of that big baby of mine, pro tem. I'll leave her with my maid."

"What, alone in the hotel? Bring her with you, Mrs. de Winton."

"You know what I mean by 'my big baby' then? You regard her as a mere child, too? I am glad of that—so glad! Ah, it is a terrible care to have a female child! In a few years, perhaps some man will want to marry her. If he has rank and title, I may—who knows?—consent to lose her. But, forgive a mother's weakness and folly! You, of all men, can least understand such feelings. At four to-morrow, did we arrange? Ah, yes. Till then, good-night. Good-night!"

When Arthur Lee found himself in the cold outer atmosphere he felt a slight reaction; and as he walked homewards through the lighted streets he went over in his mind the events of the last few hours.

First he recalled the words and bearing of his new acquaintance, Mrs. de Winton, and he was vexed with himself that he could not entertain more cordial feelings towards her. Now at first sight that lady had appeared to him a clever woman of the world; yet she had evidently made up her mind that he was a poor man—or at least, as she expressed it, a comparatively poor man—one who was forced to work to live.

Whereas, had she listened to the common gossip of the place, or what was much more likely for a clever woman of this world to do—had she enclosed a fee to town she might have obtained, from Somerset House, a copy of his father's will, whereby she would have seen he was not a poor man by any means; but, on the contrary—rich. After all it pleased him that she believed him poor. Had she known otherwise, perhaps——

A throng of ideas, precepts, warnings, given him by his father, here recurred to him. Mr. Lee, senior, was well known as a woman hater, and as having done his utmost to indoctrinate his principles upon his son.

"Beware of women, Arthur," was his counsel on his death-bed. "They have been a bad lot from Eve downwards. They look on man as their natural prey. They'll wait and watch for him, and sneak and purr to him. Beware most when they are sleekest."

"I've never yet seen the woman I should like to marry, and don't suppose I ever shall," was Arthur's answer. Whereon the old man chuckled, as he said—"That's right, lad. I've saved, and screwed, and pinched myself for you. Don't let a woman spend a hap'orth of my coin."

But by the time Arthur Lee had reached his house in Elyston Place, and opened the door with his latch-key, such memories had flown to the four winds.

The echoes of a sweet young voice that sang: "Love me, Too-too, kiss me, Too-too!" seemed sounding in his memory, while the graceful form of the beautiful girl with the rippling brown hair and the white bird on her shoulder, was almost as distinctly a reality to his mental vision as was the sweet song to his ear.

On the following afternoon Mrs. and Miss de Winton were shown up by Mr. Lee's housekeeper to his drawing-room. It was a large apartment, furnished in the usual style of forty years ago. The gas was lighted and tea ready on a side table near the fire.

When the host had welcomed and exchanged a few words with his visitors, Mrs. de Winton, with accustomed savoir faire, offered to pour out the tea, and suggested she should play hostess, with the real host and Leila for her guests. This arrangement suited admirably.

"These are by no means the poor bachelor quarters I had been led to except," said the lady, seating herself at the tea-table and looking appreciatingly at the comfortable surroundings.

"The house, with all in it, is as my father left it. The expense of living here is not more than I can quite well afford," he answered smiling. It pleased, while at the same time it interested and amused him, to keep up this fiction of his poverty.

"I like this house and this locality," she continued: "the houses are well built and handsome. There is a well-to-do air about them that appears lacking in most of the new residences I have been looking at to-day. I have some thoughts of taking the unoccupied house two doors off this, and appointed to meet the owner to-morrow, when I expect we shall come to terms. Of course he will require references, but with these I am well provided—my London banker and others—therefore I need not ask permission to make use of your name ——"

"If you require it, Mrs. de Winton, my name is at your service."

"O, thanks! A thousand thanks. But my banker——"

"Mamma, I should think Mr. Lee's name would be of far more value here than that of anyone so far off as London."

Mrs. de Winton flashed a meaning look at Arthur. "Is she not indeed the mere baby I described?" she whispered.

The girl heard the words, and a faint flush rose to her face. She left her seat and, walking to the furthest window, bent her head over some flowering plants, as though examining them closely.

In an instant Arthur was by her side.

"Do you care for these?" he asked, leaning with her over a large azalea. "I don't know anything of flowers myself, and am not used to having plants about my room. I sent out for these to-day."

"Because we were coming?"

"Yes."

"They are very well," she said, a little doubtingly.

"You have been used to prettier flowers, perhaps?"

"Oh, yes! In our convent garden——"

"Tell me of your convent garden. Describe it to me—will you?" he asked, eagerly.

"May I?"

And raising her eyes to his, she read there such a look of listening earnestness as impelled her to go on.

"I love to think of it even now," she said, in a low tone, that thrilled with suppressed feeling. "The thought is like a prayer to me. Do you know those tall, white lilies that bloom on a stem so straight as if they would put out flowers to reach to heaven, but all at once stop short and bend their pure white faces as though too humble to look higher? You do? Ah! Then picture it! All along the moss-grown, red-brick convent wall stand rows of these, like nuns—or holy guardian spirits, they always seemed to me. Lower down in front, a hedge of myrtle grew, and in front of that again, close to the ground, a mass of pansies—pansies of every kind and hue."

"But—the lilies would die when winter came? It would be winter even in your convent garden?"

"Yes," she answered, looking straight up into his face once more, "but before they died they had made their presence so much felt it seemed as though their shadows still were there. We scarcely missed them till the summer brought them back again."

With a sudden change to a lighter tone, the girl continued:

"Fancy, Mr. Lee! one pensionnat brought with her a little book called 'The Language of Flowers!' Oh, how I longed to read it—and, when I did, what was my disappointment to find it all mere nonsense! The true language of flowers is a silent one; it could not be put in print."

"'Language of flowers?' 'Print?' My child, of what can you be talking? Surely they did not teach you frivolities at your convent?"

Mrs. de Winton had approached the speakers. So marked a tete-a-tete could scarcely be permitted to last longer.

"No, mother. No frivolities were taught us there," was Leila's answer, and during the remainder of the visit the girl observed a total silence, unless addressed by either Arthur or her mother.

When the carriage was announced, Arthur felt a restless longing to say something more to Leila, but it was an indefinite something, he knew not what. He stood bare-headed at the carriage door. Some flakes of snow were falling; the wind blew piercingly.

"How cold!" cried Mrs. de Winton, shivering ostensibly as she essayed to draw up the window. "Do not stand there, Mr. Lee, I beg. We shall be near neighbors soon—till then, good-bye!"

The words struck him with a cold chill which the piercing wind had failed to do.

"Surely I shall see you before then?"

Mrs. de Winton carelessly replied:

"I shall be very much occupied next week, but will let you know when I am ready for callers. Please tell the coachman to drive on. Good-evening, and many thanks for all your kindness."

Without another word or look, Arthur turned and re-entered the house. The change from extreme cordiality to coldness on Mrs. de Winton's part affected him keenly, but he was at no loss to guess the cause.

She thought him a poor man, and believed already that he loved her daughter. And had she not averred her desire that Leila should marry rank and title? Rank and title! Empty words. They could not en-

sure happiness. Wealth according to the code in which he had been educated, could; and he possessed it.

Three or four days passed after this, and Arthur saw nothing, and heard nothing of his new acquaintances.

When walking to and from his office, he looked up at the house—two doors from his own—which Mrs. de Winton talked of taking, and saw no change in it; until one day he found the shutters open, ladders against the walls, and a swarm of workmen busily employed.

A week later, upholsterers' vans stood before the door, and at last the window blinds and shades were there, the door-steps cleaned, the brasses polished, and he knew by the general aspect of the house that it was tenantless no longer.

When he had dined that evening a small and dainty note was brought him, perfumed, monogrammed. He opened it with an eagerness he had never known in opening a note before.

"DEAR MR. LEE,—At last the weary workpeople have departed, and it is my intention to be at home on Friday afternoons. On these occasions need I say it will afford me the greatest pleasure to receive your visits?

"Sincerely yours,
GERALDINE DE WINTON."

Arthur crushed the offending paper in his hand.

"I will go," he said to himself a little bitterly; "I will go and she knows it. But surely it was not necessary to sting me by another proof that she had read my feelings?"

He rose and paced the floor with impatience.

"It is not yet time to let her know my true position; when the day comes I will go to her fearlessly. Gold, gold, gold! Aye, my father was right there. It is the passport to every good the world can offer. If by pouring it at the mother's feet——"

But there he paused. "Good heavens, would I so buy the love of that pure angel!"

Three days must intervene before he made that call. Three days! Once during this drear desert of time, when passing the house No. 10, he lifted his eyes to one of the windows with a certain consciousness that he should see there the object of his thoughts. He was not deceived.

The girl stood as he had pictured her; the white bird on her shoulder. He raised his hat, whereon she gave him a bewitching smile from lips and eyes—eyes that smiled beneath the veil of their dark curved lashes.

All things came in course of time, so Friday afternoon came for Arthur Lee, and he was shown up into the handsomely furnished drawing-room of his fair neighbor.

He was not the only guest, however. The vicar of St. Paul's—the parish priest—with clean-shaven face, bland smile, and strictest clerical attire, was sitting and looking very much at home with the widow; while a young and good-looking girl, one of his many daughters, was laughing merrily with Leila.

"Then when may I number you among my flock?" asked the vicar, insinuatingly; continuing the conversation with Mrs. de Winton, which Arthur's entrance had interrupted. "Our sittings are supposed to be all free, but, in your case——"

"Oh do not make the slightest difference on my account, Mr. Vaughn," the lady protested earnestly; "Leila and I desire to be among your most devoted, most humble followers. The dear girl is ready to be quite devout. You will permit me to send weekly, and on all the saints' days, flowers for the church?"

"It would ill become a poor priest like me to decline so sweet a gift," replied the vicar.

Then Arthur knew that Mrs. de Winton had contributed flowers for the decoration for the church, and that the vicar's call was made to tender thanks for them.

The splendor of the flowers on the previous Sunday had been the theme of universal gossip, and Arthur believed he saw through Mrs. de Winton's ruse.

"Ah," thought he, "she is beginning well. She wished to ensure a call from the most fashionable clergyman in the town. She has succeeded."

His reverie was broken in upon by Mrs. de Winton. "Have you heard from the duke, saying when he returns to the castle, Mr. Lee?"

"I had a telegram to-day. He arrives at the central station at noon to-morrow."

"And you meet him at the station?"

"Yes."

"I can imagine his surprise to hear that I have settled here. Ah, what a charming woman the dear duchess was! You knew her, Mr. Vaughn? No?——Her health was sadly delicate. Those winters she used to spend at Nice——days that I remember, alas, too well! The dear General——" She broke off abruptly with a long-drawn sigh, then turned lightly to speak on some common topic of the hour. A true artist in her way, none knew better than she that a few masterly touches will sometimes produce a better effect than the most finished picture. The vicar and his daughter shortly afterwards took their leave, as highly impressed by Mrs. de Winton's social importance and graceful courtesy of manner, as she had desired they should be.

"Mr. Lee," the lady began, sinking into a low causeuse, having first dismissed Leila, and she laid her long white fingers, sparkling with gems, impressively on his coat sleeve, "I have come to the conclusion to be quite frank with you and, in all the relations we may have hereafter, to treat you in fact as l'ami de la famille. Is this quite understood? Thank you. Then now to begin and expound my little plans. To-morrow I shall be at the station when the duke arrives. It is many years since we met; more than possible he has forgotten me. You will, however, kindly name me to him."

"Excuse me, Mrs. de Winton, but—do I understand you wish me to introduce you to the duke to-morrow, at the station?"

"That is exactly what I mean, dear Mr. Lee.

"It is all for dearest Leila's sake, that I am so anxious to gain a good footing in the county."

"But you spoke before as though you know the duke. I cannot do as you request. It is impossible."

"Impossible? O, that is too absurd! Why, I could have brought a dozen letters of introduction from mutual friend. Is your duke so changed a man since I last knew him? Is he a Goth, and ogre, a something altogether outside the pale of civilised society? Or—" she continued, transfixing Arthur with a glittering glance—"Or—is this what you consider me?"

In vain Arthur protested that no words ever were more inapplicable to either side. The duke was a polished gentleman, not by any means averse to feminine society; but this admission only damaged his case.

Steps by step the ground gave way beneath his feet. The wily woman gained her point, being ignorant of the one argument he withheld—withheld because he felt that if she knew it she would despise him.

The truth was this. In all his intercourse with the duke, Arthur Lee had never once by word or deed overstepped the boundary line of their respective stations.

He was the paid servant of the Duke of Wearshire, and an old fashioned Tory as his father was before him.

He dined at the duke's table, on occasion, but he no more considered himself on an equality with the peer, than he considered his own office-boy as level with himself.

Next day Arther Lee performed the hardest task that as yet had fallen to his lot.

It warred alike against his judgment and his taste. Mrs de Winton, exquisitely but quietly dressed, was at the station when he awaited the arrival of the duke.

To all appearance her presence at the time was the result of accident, and when the train stopped and the duke stepped on to the platform, he glanced at the strikingly handsome woman standing beside him.

The glance was returned on her part by a slight start, a smile as of sudden recognition; a hand held out, then as quickly again withdrawn. The duke having shaken hands with Arthur, seeing that the lady appeared to be in the company of his agent, looked inquiringly at the latter.

"Mrs. de Winton, your grace," Arthur said; then stood stern, grave, with lips compressed, an unwilling witness to a scene which may be dismissed in a very few words.

The duke raised his hat, the lady murmured something about "unexpected pleasure," "met at Nice," "my dear husband, General de Winton."

The long aristocratic face of the duke wore a perplexed expression, while he listened deferentially, and in return said a few polite conventional nothings.

"Can't recall her in the least," he remarked to Arthur when the lady, with a sweeping bow, had turned away. "One meets so many good-looking English women abroad in a casual way."

But his eyes followed her; as a man's eyes—be he peer or peasant—naturally turn to follow a handsome woman, whether in England or elsewhere. It so chanced that Alice Vaughn and her sisters, being at the station at the time, had witnessed from a distance this little scene. The consequence was that before two days elapsed, the story of the incident was circulating freely through the town.

Then came the inevitable question, and remarks to be heard on every side:

"Have you called on Mrs. de Winton? Charming woman; evidently moves in the best society; such an amount of 'savoir faire,' you know. Immensely rich. Who is she? Oh, no need to inquire into her antecedents! The duke knows her well. She was a friend to the poor duchess when she was so ill abroad. The duke caused Mr. Lee to engage a house for her near his own; he manages her affairs, and is to show her every attention. Too grand for you to call upon? Oh, dear, no! She has the most charming manners; is most anxious to make acquaintances. She assured me of this herself. Not in the least proud. These real aristocrats never are you know. Alice Vaughn says that the girl—who, by the bye, is lovely—is simplicity itself. Think of the advantage to our sons and daughters to be invited to the entertainments which they intend to give!"

* * * * * *

No. 10 Ellyston Place was soon beseiged by callers. The new showily-appointed landau with its three hundred guinea roans, belonging to the nouveau riche, Mrs. Shoddy, of Shopperton Villa, dashed up to the door simultaneously with the old family coach of Lady Vere de Vere, with her sickly son, poor and proud, but on the look-out for a rich bride.

The clergy of all denominations came—from the Lord Bishop of the diocese to the poorest Presbyterian preacher—for was not the lady reputed rich and generous?

The big China bowl on the massive oak hall-table was filled with cards to overflowing; and when at last invitations were issued in Mrs. de Winton's name for a ball to be given in the assembly rooms—her own house being quite inadequate to contain the number of guests expected—the excitement in town and county grew intense.

The ball was fixed for the third week in January. Mrs. de Winton, with that certainty of success which so often seems to ensure it—in other words, audacity—addressed an invitation to the Duke of Wearshire.

There was a meet of the hounds at the Castle on the day her note was timed to reach him. Mrs. de Winton drove over, was recognized by his Grace, and she and Lena were escorted by him into the Castle. The rest was easy to a woman of her resources. The Duke of Wearshire honored Mrs. de Winton with his presence at her ball on the 27th of January.

The entertainment was a brilliant success, and the lady's position in the country was established, while in the town she won golden opinions by her courtesy and affability to all and every one with whom she came in contact.

But all this time how prospered the love of Arthur Lee for the fair young girl who had so unconsciously and entirely upset his prejudices against womankind?

He saw her rarely excepting in the company of others. Mrs. de Winton threw every conceivable obstacle in the way of his meeting her alone.

This, it is needless to say, instead of cooling his passion, served but to add fresh fuel to its flames. These women were so different to the women his father had condemned! Even the mother—towards whom Arthur nourished an indefinable antipathy—was evidently no fortune-hunter; if she had been she would have marked him as her prey.

There was no question that he loved the girl, nay, almost worshipped her. To him she was fair and pure as were the white stately lilies in her convent garden, the thought of which was as a prayer to her. Could he ever forget those words? And to him—was she not an embodied prayer?

He went regularly throughout Lent—more regularly than he had ever done in his earlier life—to the services at the parish church.

He wondered sometimes as he took his seat on one side of the aisle how many men came there because their "one women in the world" was divided from them but by that narrow aisle of stone.

And then he thought "most surely the love of man for a good, pure woman is his best safeguard against the world—his surest guide to heaven."

At last the day arrived that was to decide his fate.

The blow fell suddenly from the master-hand of Mrs. de Winton; the result was what she expected and desired. Arthur had returned with the ladies after morning service on Easter Sunday. Mrs. de Winton dismissed her daughter with a look. Then she began:

"Mr. Lee, I think of breaking off all our engagements here, and leaving next week for London. My sweet girl must have the advantages of other girls in her position; she must be presented at the next drawing-room; more especially now, when—in fact I will confide to you. The time has already come that I once told you I looked forward to, but dreaded. Sir Algernon Vere de Vere has asked my sanction to his engagement with Leila. He is amiable, and the sole representative of one of the oldest and proudest country families. Leila has refused to see him since she heard of his intentions, but she is a complete child, you know, and needs guidance, poor darling. Dear Mr. Lee! you will, I am sure, talk to her? You will set before her the advantage of such a marriage? You will speak to her as to a dear sister of your own——"

"This I cannot do," answered Arthur firmly, compressing his lips and looking at Mrs. de Winton with steady eyes, but a face which had been growing gradually paler beneath her gaze.

"You—cannot? Why?"

"Because—I love her!"

He could not control the words. He could not recall them, nor did he wish to do so. He stood up before the lady, erect and manly; even proud that the moment had arrived for him to speak.

"You love Leila? Is it possible?"

"I thought you guessed it."

A gleam of satisfaction she could not repress came to her lips with the reply.

"How transparent, after all, my supposed cleverness has been! Yes, dear friend, I was indeed afraid at one time—But, ah, believe me! It was from mercenary motives solely that I strove to keep you and Leila apart. But for these, you are the man I should have chosen from all the world to be the husband of my child. As it is, I can but deplore——"

The hot blood rushed to Arthur's face, his eyes shone.

"My secret need be no longer kept, Mrs. de Winton. I am a rich man, though I have neither rank nor title. If you will give your daughter to me, I will spend all I have upon her."

"Then why did you deceive me?"

"You chose to deceive yourself, so it appears to me, and, if you remember, you declined to hear the confession I was on the point of making to you. I will make it now, however, in figure instead of word."

And seating herself at a table Arthur took a note-book from his pocket, and in a business-like way wrote in pencil a rough statement of the money left him by his father, in the funds and elsewhere.

Mrs. de Winton accepted his suit, but made sundry stipulations with regard to the mode in which she would expect her daughter to live when married, and to all but one of these Arthur quickly and readily agreed. What that was will appear hereafter. Finding him inexorable on this point, she left, promising to send in Leila.

Five, ten minutes elapsed before the door opening softly admitted the girl. She came in with downcast face and lips that trembled nervously. He caught her hand in his and drew her towards him.

"Leila, my darling!"

Raising her clear, truthful eyes, and trying to look at him steadily, the heavy lashes wet with unshed tears, she said:

"Mamma says—says you wish to marry me"

"Oh, my darling, if you only knew how I have loved you!"

"Only I did not know. Perhaps I do not understand what love is quite yet, Mr Lee," she answered, slowly.

"But I will teach you——" He! Arthur Lee, who all his life till now had scoffed at sentiment!

"Will you? Anything is better than ——."

"Than what?"

"Than marrying—" she broke off abruptly, blushing deeply.

"Sir Algernon?"

"Ah, then you? I was afraid I should have been compelled—I mean persuaded ——"

"But you shall not marry him. You shall never see him again against your wish. Leila, you will be mine—my darling wife. How proud I shall be of you! I have promised your mother that I will live very differently when she gives you to me: a country house, carriages, horses, jewels. I have never cared for such things myself, but you shall have all that money can buy."

Looking up into his face and smiling a smile that from the first had bewitched him, she said: "I have heard that money can buy all things in this world excepting one."

"And that is——?" he asked, a little anxiously.

"Love."

He had no response ready. He looked at her bewildered. Unconsciously she had touched a chord that vibrated painfully.

Recovering himself, he drew her beside him on a sofa, and began telling her how he loved her from the very first.

Then, responsive to his questioning, she spoke of her girl life, spent within the convent wall, and he heard her with the rapt reverence of a mortal listening to a voice from heaven.

There are those whom love strengthens; thus was a strong man made weak, and to grow weaker still beneath love's thrall.

The news of Mrs. de Winton's engagement to Mr. Lee spread rapidly. By many it was looked upon as a *mesalliance*, but at the same time a proof of the unworldliness of Mrs. de Winton, that she should permit her daughter to marry a man of so little social position; for money itself, they argued, to those who appeared so well endowed with this world's goods, could be no object.

The engagement became a nine days' wonder, and ended there; for, in less than as many weeks the marriage was performed with great pomp and ceremony at St. Paul's Church by Mr. Vaughn and his assistant curates; and amid the usual formalities, rejoicings, and good wishes, the bride and bridegroom set off on their wedding tour.

They were now irrevocably joined together, whether "for better" or "for worse" will be seen hereafter.

* * * * * *

Six months later found Arthur Lee a changed man.

Launched into circumstances so entirely new to him, he became prodigal, reckless; bent only as it seemed, on scattering to the winds the wealth that hitherto had lain useless.

Nor was it surprising that Leila, his wife, introduced into a whirl of pleasure, should have been led—partly by heedlessness, but chiefly by her mother's connivance—to indulge in the wildest extravagance.

It had been mentioned that there was one requirement of Mrs. de Winton's to which Arthur refused consent. This was that he should give up the duke's agency. In all else he was prepared to run counter to his father's admonitions, but not with regard to the agency; he clung to that with a persistent obstinacy—almost amounting to superstition—because his father had desired him to do so. It was the sole remnant of his old life.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee spent Christmas and the New Year at their country house, where they entertained all comers; the second week in January they returned to No. 12 Ellyston Place.

Between six and seven o'clock one evening Leila was awaiting her husband's return from his office, where he appeared to have been detained later than usual. On hearing a latch-key in the door she went into the hall to meet him.

"Come in here a moment, Arthur, I wish to speak with you," she said, eagerly, after their usual loving greeting, and she led the way into the dining-room. "Mamma is in such trouble. But I have told her you will put all right."

And she looked up into his face with the honest trusting eyes that pleaded more eloquently than words. Never yet had they asked for anything in vain.

"I will do what I can."

"I knew you would, and so I told her! You see, mamma thinks a great deal about money, far more than you or I do. And she has heard to-day that she had lost almost everything. And there is the house and the furniture to pay for, and oh, I don't know what besides. But, Arthur, how glad I am that we have it in our power so easily to make all right! A few thousands—a very few—and mamma will be happy again once more."

Withdrawing his hands from her gentle

grasp he sat down on the nearest chair. The lamplight shining on his face showed lines of care that had never been revealed before. "A few thousands—a very few!" he repeated, mechanically. Of late his eyes had been opening gradually.

This was a more complete awakening.

"Arthur!"

His name spoken in a low thrilling voice, and Leila kneeling in front of him, recalled him instantly and hurriedly.

"Are you--are you—displeased with me for anything?"

"With you, my child? Oh, no!"

"Why, Arthur, you have always told me money was mere dross, only good to spend ——"

"To spend on you, my darling."

"But I have been too selfish hitherto, wanting everything for myself. This time I ask it for poor mamma."

"And you shall have it," he answered, kissing her and rising, but still with a troubled face. "Did she tell your how she lost her money? Where was it placed? Not in the local bank, I know: which—you may have seen by to-day's newspapers—has failed?"

Failed and carried away thousands, not "a few" of Arthur's money! But of this he would not speak to his young wife.

"Oh, she says she gave you a statement of the sums and securities lodged with her banker in London, but she removed the greater part soon afterwards and placed it with a friend, at much higher interest, I think she said, and that friend——"

"Of course! The old story. But your mother was the last woman I should have suspected of such folly. If she has done as she says, she is no wiser than her fellows. Her friend is not a fool, but worse."

"Yes, yes. But Arthur, the harm is done now; and mother is so wretched! She says she feels it so that she cannot bear to speak of it to you. Come, darling husband," and forcing him back into a chair, she knelt down once more before him, putting up her sweet lips to his. "Arthur, all you have to do is to write some figures in a little book you carry in your pocket, sign your name, tear out the leaf, and give it me. I give it with a kiss to mamma, and she is happy once again, and for evermore! You will do this for my sake, Arthur?"

She looked so truthful, so lovable and radiant as she spoke, clasping her pretty white hands together in playful supplication—what could he do but yield? "You love me Leila—now?" he asked, feverishly.

"Love you? Oh, Arthur!" and throwing her arms round his neck and laying her head upon his shoulder, she looked into his eyes the answer.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Uncle Jeff's Fortune.

BY L. A. M. N.

OH, Kate, mamma has just received a letter from Uncle Jeff! He is really coming back from Australia to settle at last. All the heaps of money he has made he has invested—yes, that's the word—invested in some—something, I don't know what, but it will nearly double his fortune!"

"Nearly double it! Oh, Nellie," cried Kate, dropping her aunt's dress she was mending, "only think. We are his only relations!"

"What a selfish little thing you are, Katie!" remarked Ellen Grashaw, throwing herself on a couch by her cousin in her mother's boudoir, which she had rather impetuously entered with her good news.

"How can one help being selfish when one is poor?" laughed Kate Wakefield. "It is all very well for you, whose father is alive and well to-do; but Jack and I have only ourselves to look to. I have to turn and turn my dresses until I'm quite ashamed. I stick a new bow here, and a new bow there, but I'm not foolish enough to fancy people think it's a new dress. Ah me, Nellie! I do—do so wish I was rich!" and she clasped her hands on her knee, and fixed her large gray eyes on vacancy, as if she were filling the latter with her visions of wealth: probably she was.

"What a mercenary girl you are, cos!" said Ellen. "You don't think at all about dear uncle Jeff himself—only his money!"

"Each of us thinks of what most concerns us, or what we most want!" retorted Kate. "He may help poor Jack, who only gets ninety pounds a year. I repeat you are rich, or your father is."

"He is not, Kate. You know it's as much as mamma can do to keep us up to our position in society. But it will be different now, for dear uncle Jeff says, as he has no relations save ourselves, he hopes we can manage to let him live with us. He can see about our renting a larger house on his arrival. Mamma is delighted, and she says he will be sure to keep his carriage: while, if we try to be amiable, he may keep horses for us to ride. Only imagine! will it not be grand? How the people will wonder and envy."

"What a lot of suitors you'll have, Nellie! Who knows but that Sir Hugh Stafford, when he comes—as they say he will, next month—to reside for the winter at Beecholm, may be one of them"

A bright flush rose to the cousin's cheek, though she exclaimed, "What nonsense, Kate!" for the fact was Ellen Grashaw was very pretty, and such a union had not only entered her head, but also her mother's—one of those wordly-minded women who render their lives wretched by a constant fight to keep their heads higher than their neighbor's', and so make five hundred a year pass for a thousand. Mrs. Grashaw, indeed, was already secretly busy in devising means for new dresses to make Ellen look her best, and to give one or two parties, ostensibly in the Baronet's honor—really to "throw the young people together."

"Papa," proceeded Nellie, "used to call uncle Jeff the 'fool of the family'—a mad speculator. I only wish, in that case, papa had changed places with him."

"When will he be here, Nell? Does he say?"

"He starts the second mail after his letter therefore he will be here in a fortnight. There's mamma calling!" she added, springing up.

"I hope it's not to dress yet, for I have not done these bows," remarked Kate, renewing her stitching.

Mr. Grashaw was a tolerably well-to-do merchant, who would would have had a safer balance at his banker's had not his inclinations in regard to appearances tended in the same direction as his wife's. What an "old man of the sea" to some persons are those words, "What will Mrs Grundy say?"

They excused themselves to themselves by saying it was for their children's benefit. Horace had to make a position in the world and Nell was to be settled.

The two other members of the family were Kate and her brother Jack (employed in a bank). When they had been left orphans Mrs. Grashaw had consented to receive them into the family, as their keep would be a mere nothing, considering one must have good dinners because of the servants' tattling; while what Kate could pay out of her small income of sixty pounds a year (besides making herself useful), and Jack out of his salary, would go into her own private purse, and afford many toilet luxuries. Besides, she knew, as Nell did too, that society, who was ignorant of any payment being made, spoke highly of their kindness, of their poor relations.

Their sole other relation was uncle Jeff—a restless, sanguine spirit, who had been always going to make a fortune, and who had at last, in Australia, done so. He had gone there when Nell and Kate were children, so all they knew of him was that he was very kind, and was ever sending pleasant letters and handsome presents to his little nieces and nephews. When Nell danced in her joy from the room, Kate, at work on her aunt's dress, thought of these presents, and it is to be feared mentally commented on Uncle Jeff's coming home in a very mercenary fashion.

"Supposing, as Jack and I are orphans, he were to adopt us?" she ponders. "At any rate, if he be so rich, he will hardly let his sister's children remain so poor. If he does not do something for Jack, I—I shall hate him!"

Then, her eye resting on a darn in her dress, her mind revelled in the better toilets she might possibly have when Uncle Jeff came home.

Uncle Jeff! Before two days were over everybody in Monkbourne knew about him, of his immense wealth, and how he was to live with the Grashaws, who were his only relations. Mr. Grashaw dropped into the estate agent's to inquire casually what mansions or small estates were to let in the neighborhood. Horace talked of Uncle Jeff at his club until the members were sick of Uncle Jeff. Mrs. Grashaw and the girls made visits and received them on purpose to let Monkbourne society know all about him.

"Very stuck up, proud people those Grashaws!" remarked Mrs. Stebbin.

"Always were. Now they will be intolerable!" rejoined the doctor's wife. "As to that Kate Wakefield, she takes no pains to hide her mercenariness!"

"Well there's an excuse for her, my dear. It can't be pleasant, I'm sure"—with a head toss—"to be dependent upon Mrs. Grashaw's charity!"

"The train will be the 1-30, no doubt, that he'll arrive by," remarked Mr. Grashaw on the day of uncle Jeff's coming, as he contemplated the recherche luncheon prepared. "I hope, my love, there is nothing to make a hitch in his welcome?"

It was a moment of great excitement. Nellie flitted everywhere; Horace lounged about, assuming indifference; Kate sat at the drawing-room window, regretting her bright, bonnie Jack, who was so worked he could not get a holiday. Suddenly, as a cab stopped at the door, she sprang up and ran to the rest.

"He has come! Uncle Jeff has come!" she exclaimed.

"Gracious! Why, he must have got up at dawn!" ejaculated Mrs. Grashaw. "Where are Nell and Horace?"

A fluttering bevy they proceeded into the hall to receive the lucky speculator. The page had already thrown wide the door, and coming up the step they saw a tall, thin, gray-haired man, with stooped shoulders and a sad, careworn visage.

"Welcome to England! Welcome home, Jeff!" cried the merchant, wringing his hand. "Dear me, how delighted I am! I congratulate you, brother!"

The welcomes and congratulations were echoed all around. They clustered about him like bees round honey. Horace took his hat, Kate his walking stick.

"Ah, George!" exclaimed Uncle Jeff, in a feeble voice, as he slightly waved his hands, "let me sit down somewhere, please. I have much to tell you!"

"Horace, fetch the wine; your uncle is fatigued after his journey. No; we will go into the dining-room at once," remarked Mrs. Grashaw.

"Much to tell us?" laughed her husband. "I should think so, Jeff, after your long absence."

They had all got into the dining-room now. The softest chair was pushed forward by Horace; Kate gave a shake to the cushions; Ellen brought a foot-stool. Uncle Jeff dropped down wearily.

"Oh, George!" he exclaimed, piteously, "how can I ever tell you—how a hundred times I have wished that I had never written you that letter—much has happened since. I am"—the gray head dropped on the withered hands—"ruined!"

Had the listeners suddenly been confronted by the face of Medusa, they could not have been more aghast—more silent. They were horrified—paralysed. The first thought of Mr. Grashaw, indeed of all, was that they had been grossly taken in.

"What do you mean, Jeff?" demanded the merchant.

"That the speculation in which I foolishly invested my all, George, was but a bubble. It burst a week before I started for home. It has ruined hundreds."

"Home! I wonder if he thinks this is his home?" reflected the merchant. "Circumstances alter cases."

"Whatever will Monkbourne say?" the wife thought. "We shall be a perfect laughing-stock. To have a pauper instead of a millionaire on our hands!"

Horace and Nell looked at each other helplessly.

Kate felt inclined to cry. Then she filled a glass with wine and handed it to uncle Jeff.

"How very officious that girl is!" thought her aunt.

"I always said you were the idiot of the family, Jeff," remarked the merchant, huffishly. "There, we may, I suppose, have luncheon; then you can tell us about it."

"Well?" inquired Jack Wakefield, eagerly, on Kate waylaying him as he was creeping upstairs to change his coat, after returning from the office, "has he come?"

"Yes, Jack; and, oh! it's so terrible! He isn't rich at all—he is a beggar. The speculation was—was a bubble, he says, and he has been ruined."

"Poor old Uncle Jeff!" exclaimed Jack, sympathetically.

"You dear—dear, darling boy!" cried Kate, throwing her arms about his neck; "that's the first kind word anyone has said of him here. Oh! Jack—Jack, I fear Aunt and Uncle Grashaw will make a great difference to him."

"Why? he wouldn't have lost his money if he could have helped it. Where is he?"

And Jack, no longer thinking of his office-coat, walked into the drawing-room, and warmly greeting the old man, remarked, heartily:

"Welcome home, Uncle Jeff! Kate has told me all. I'm so sorry, 'pon my word I am; but never mind; *nil desperandum*, you know—better luck next time."

"Heaven bless you, my dear boy—thank you," rejoined Uncle Jeff, gratefully; for already he was awakening to his position. And such a pleased, radiant expression came over his features, that, like a flash, an idea sprang up in Mrs. Grashaw's head that Uncle Jeff was pretending poverty to test their affection.

But her husband soon negatived that. There was no pretense; but hard, bona fide, unpleasable ruin.

Monkbourne did laugh and did sneer. That might have been some excuse for the Grashaws; but before a fortnight was over Uncle Jeff found himself so much in the way that, hurt, pained, he announced his intention of leaving, and no one asked him to remain.

That evening, however, Jack came into his room on the third floor with Kate, and the two made a proposition. To let Uncle Jeff in his great trouble go and live alone was more than terrible to these silly young people; it was impossible. Would Uncle Jeff like them to put all their tiny incomes together, and take a little cottage just outside the town and live in it? Kate would be the most economical of housekeepers.

Uncle Jeff sat aghast.

"And you would do this for me, my children?" he exclaimed. "You would give up your fine life and the fine guests here at George's to—to——"

"Be quite as happy elsewhere," laughed Kate, kissing him. "You mustn't refuse, uncle; I will not hear of it! You can't tell how merry we three people will be together!"

"I don't doubt that in my case, my love," answered Uncle Jeff, looking into her bright face and grasping Jack's hand.

"Then it's agreed, uncle?" remarked Jack.

"Heaven bless you, children, how can I say no?"

So it was settled.

The Grashaws were at first indignant, but later rejoiced in the ground it gave them to break with their poor relations, especially with those ungrateful Wakefields.

But there they were wrong. Gratitude had been the cause. All the real gifts and benefits Jack and Kate had received from anyone had been from Uncle Jeff, who had never asked or wanted a return.

In a fortnight the cottage Jack had had his eye on received its tenants. It was very small but very pretty. From morning to night Kate flitted about it, seeing to this, then that, inventing nice little surprises—into which Uncle Jeff heartily entered—for dear old Jack's dinner-tea, or "high tea," as she laughingly termed it. She no longer thought of turning her dresses as often, nor "sticking a new bow here and a new bow there;" but in her dark stuff dresses she looked happier, handsomer, than she ever had at the Grashaws'.

"It's quite like setting up housekeeping for one's self!" she laughed, merrily.

The cottage was situated at the other side of the town to that wherein was the Grashaws' house, so Kate rarely met them; but she heard of them and their doings from one or two of those mutual friends, who, admiring the part the brother and sister had played, kept up their acquaintance. From one of these she learned how Sir Hugh Stafford had arrived at Beecholm from his world-wanderings, and had been *feted* accordingly by all the *elite* of Monkbourne, the Grashaws being among the number.

"There will be rare puffing caps for the Baronet among the mothers with marriageable daughters!" laughed the old lady, Kate's informant; "and *entre nous*, my dear, your aunt, Mrs. Grashaw, will not be behindhand!"

Kate, seated in the little parlor at work, found subjects for long trains of thought out of this. She wondered if Nellie would win the Baronet? She was pretty enough. Then would not aunt hold her head high?

Her cogitations were arrested by the sound of voices. Looking from the window she saw that Uncle Jeff had halted at the gate, apparently to take leave of a friend—a gentleman, of about thirty, with a pleasant intelligent face, but—such was Kate's mental remark—more manly than handsome.

"Uncle back and no tea!" she exclaimed, springing up. "Time flies when one is thinking! Why, uncle is bringing his friend in! If it's to tea, he must just take what I have got!"

The door opened, and Uncle Jeff entered with the stranger, who Kate saw had exceedingly fine brown eyes.

"My darling," said Uncle Jeff, "I have met an old friend. Pardon me if I put you out at all, but I could not refrain from bringing him home to introduce him to my young benefactors."

"Benefactors, Uncle Jeff. Oh, pray, sir, do not believe that," smiled Kate, blushing. "Ours is rather a mutual aid society."

"I think I should like to join it," smiled the stranger, and those brown eyes dwelt very admiringly on the young girl's face. "May I?"

"I fear it is impossible," she rejoined. "It's limited in number as in capital." Then she looked at Uncle Jeff.

"I beg your pardon, Kate, but I forgot the introduction. My dear, this is Sir Hugh Stafford."

"Whose place would now long have been filled by another," said the Baronet, bowing, "but for your uncle, Miss Wakefield, who, while I was in Australia years ago, saved my life, at the risk of his own, from a rascally bushranger."

"I never knew then," laughed Uncle Jeff, "that the young red garabaldi-attired digger was to blossom into an English Baronet."

"Neither did I for certain; but next mail my cousin's death reached me."

"You'll stay, Sir Hugh, to tea?"

Kate had been overwhelmed upon hearing who was Uncle Jeff's friend. Now she felt ready to sink on the floor at the invitation given, especially when the Baronet accepted it.

What was that in his voice, his manner, that put Kate at once at her ease, and made her quite sincere in saying she should be delighted? Whatever it was, she never felt less nervous in preparing the evening meal, and never did it go off better. The conversation never flagged, and the Baronet seemed as if he had known them for years. Then Jack came in, and the hours slipped away, until nearly ten o'clock when Sir Hugh took his leave, asking Jack to walk part of the way with him to smoke a cigar.

When Jack returned he was radiant. Sir Hugh had found out how he had been studying, and how he had passed some examinations with success, and had promised to procure him a place under Government.

"Oh, dear," thought Kate, smiling, as she retired to rest. "What would Aunt Grashaw say?"

What would she, and what did she, and what did all Monkbourne say, when it was known how constant a guest Sir Hugh was at the cottage? Of course it was as a patron!

The Baronet was generous and pitied Jeff—wanted to make him a return for that Australian affair. But Kate, though she called herself silly, foolish, vain, could not help fancying that there was another reason for Sir Hugh's coming; and she was right.

"Admiring the view, Miss Wakefield?" he asked, one evening.

"Yes; it is worthy admiration and pride!" she smiled.

Abruptly he had drawn nearer, her hand was imprisoned in his, as he said:

"Miss Wakefield—Kate—I have come to you here to ask if you will share that pride? If you, whom I so honor—you, the only woman I ever loved or can love—will be my wife?"

Then she learned how his fancy had been won for the brother and sister on learning Uncle Jeff's story of his return home; how he had been curious to see them, and how he had loved Kate from the very evening that he did.

"You will not refuse me, dear?" he whispered, in conclusion.

She lifted her eyes to his, and, as he drew her to his heart, Kate, trembling and happy, did not resist.

Years have passed; children's happy voices make musical the air of Beecholm, and rise up to Uncle Jeff's ears, often summoning him to the window. He is still "poor, ruined Uncle Jeff;" but he doesn't feel so, for all are kind to him.

AYER'S Ague Cure breaks up the chill and fever, expels the poison from the system, and restores health. Warranted to cure.

Our Young Folks.

AN ENCHANTED PRINCESS.

BY E. A. E. N.

[CONCLUDED FROM LAST WEEK.]

SHE does not love me, said Amor to himself. "She only cares for my wealth," and he was very sorrowful.

His people strove to cheer him; they thought he felt the parting from the Princess; but Amor could not be comforted. He knew, though they did not, that a decree had been made at his birth, whereby unless he was beloved by the lady of his choice, he might no longer retain his fair realm. He must resign all his possessions, and wander houseless and homeless through the world.

So, when the night came, he laid aside his purple robe, and left the Palace, silently and unseen, and the next day his pale twin-sister reigned in his stead.

Meanwhile our King and Queen were busy making preparations for the nuptials, which they intended to celebrate at the end of the year. And the young Princess, for the first time in her life, was left to take care of herself.

One day, as she was walking with her maidens, she saw a poor man standing by the wayside; his cheeks were pale and sunken, his dress worn and threadbare, and his eyes, when he lifted them to her face, looked very sad.

"Who is that?" asked the Princess.

"Only a beggar," answered her ladies.

"What is a beggar?"

"He lives on alms, he want you to give him something."

Then the Princess noticed that the man was holding out his hand towards her. She pressed forward and dropped a gold piece into it.

"Are you so poor? have you nothing of your own?"

"Nothing," he answered; "yet I will not take your bounty for nothing; I will come and make music for it."

"Come to-day," said the Princess. "I am dull. I should like to hear your music." And she passed on her way, with her maidens.

When he came to the Palace, she received him seated on her throne, surrounded by her lords and ladies. These tittered, and shrugged, and sneered, but the Princess greeted him kindly and bade him begin to play at once.

He took up his lyre, and as soon as he touched the chords, the room was filled with the dewy fragrance of a May morning.

As the music swelled, the walls of the Palace fell away, and the Princess saw a strange and beautiful country unfold itself before her eyes.

Green meadows, untrodden by the foot of mortal; lakes and fountains, clear beneath an azure sky; forest glades, opening to show their labyrinth of mossy paths; hills bright with bilberry and bracken, melting away into purple mystery; and the farther the landscape extended into the distance, the fairer grew the scene.

The season was always Spring, with the songs of birds, the laughter of brooks, and the tender verdure of the early year; yet the fields and orchards were ripe for harvest, and roses bloomed along with the violet and daffodil.

The Princess gazed, and gazed, and never stirred; for she was looking into Fairyland. Ah! that was wonderful music!

At the last strains died away the prospect faded, and the walls closed over it. But the Princess sat with her dreamy eyes still fixed on the place where now was only cold marble and gilding.

The Courtiers woke up, and tried to find out what they were expected to think of the performance. The musician had quietly disappeared, but he had left on the steps of the throne a garland of flowers for the Princess. She touched the flowers tenderly and I know I can in her hair, and when her mother saw them, she sighed, and said, "The sight of these flowers brings back to me the days when I was young, and ran about the fields in my own country, gathering posies."

"What a fuss about a few pansies," said the Courtiers. They wondered how the beggar had come by the flowers, but the Princess knew that they bloomed in the bright land the music had shown her.

Every day the minstrel came to the Palace to play, and each time he left behind him a fresh wreath.

He sang songs sometimes; and his songs were all about flowers and sunshine, like the songs of birds.

He told stories; and his stories were all fairy-tales with happy endings. The Princess loved them, but her ladies said: "We had rather hear about gold fringe and diamonds."

"Or about fine eating," said the lords.

"Or something witty, to make us laugh," said they all. They spoke low to each other, that the Princess might not hear them.

She was quite happy in these day, but her father and mother had their troubles.

The King rubbed his eyes and pinched himself, and tried to believe he was dreaming; but there was no mistake about it! There, beneath his very casement, wound a verdant track, from which the snow had disappeared; and celandine and primrose laughed in his face.

Moreover, he saw beyond, a belt of woodland, where the tops of the trees were actually green; and he could even hear the cooing of birds!

"Here's a pretty mess," he cried. "We shall soon have all the kingdom in disorder!"

He puzzled, and pondered, but he could not make it out. He did not know that the minstrel slept of nights in the coppice, and trod the path every day to the Princess's tower.

The Queen was in no less trouble and perplexity on her own account. The time for the royal nuptials were now at hand, and messengers had arrived from the Court of Amor with the strange tidings of his absence.

At the same time they besought that the Princess might come to the wedding, as though nothing had happened; for they believed that when the bride arrived the Prince would re-appear and all would be well.

Now the Queen liked the plan very little, but, not knowing what else to do, she resolved to follow the advice of the messengers, and to say nothing of the matter to the Princess.

Her subjects brought a golden crown as a bridal present to the Princess, and the Queen herself placed it on her head, laying aside the natural wreath the minstrel had given her.

But the Princess saw that the flowers became her best, and she tried to bind them round the crown. They at once withered and fell to the ground. Then the Princess was vexed.

"Take the crown away," she said. "I will not wear it." Nor could any persuasion induce her to put it on again.

The next time the minstrel came, the Princess told him that she was going to marry a great King, and asked if he would live at her Court, and play for her. But the minstrel shook his head.

"That cannot be," he answered. "But you will not want me there, you will soon forget me." And he made such sorrowful music that the Princess wept, and when the last day came, she wept still more bitterly, and said to the minstrel:

"Since you cannot come with me, I will not go at all. The land you show me is fairer than the kingdom of Amor, and he can give me nothing I care for so much as your music."

Then the minstrel said, "Will you come with me, to live with a poor wanderer, instead of going to the greatest Prince in the world?"

"Yes, that I will," answered the Princess, joyfully.

"I sing from house to house wherever they will listen to my music," he continued. "Sometimes I lodge with the poorest peasantry. It is but seldom I am entertained at Courts."

"I will go with you," repeated the Princess; and the maids of honor waited to hear no more, but fled all together, with lifted hands and wide open eyes, to tell the Queen what her Royal Highness was saying to the minstrel. The Queen ran to the King with cries of horror, "Our daughter is bewitched!" she said. The King dispatched his own Life-guards at once, with orders to bring him the beggar's head forthwith. But the Guards returned discomfited. The beggar was too strong for them.

"Bothrew me!" cried their old leader, sucking his knuckles, "he hath a corslet under his fustian!"

Whereupon the King rolled up his maxims into a light and formidable weapon. "I'll crack his skull for him!" he cried.

Presently he, too, came back, looking foolish.

"Well?" cried the Queen.

The King rubbed his nose feebly with his own maxims.

"Why, my dear, to say the truth, he has a sort of look that abashes me. And I cannot tell, I cannot remember, yet methinks I have surely seen his face before! It must have been a long time ago."

The same fancy had troubled the Queen, but she would not own it. She questioned the Courtiers as to who the beggar was? where he came from? and how he got into the kingdom?

No one could tell.

Then the Lord-Biographer, whose arduous duty it was to assign good reasons for the conduct of the King, was desired to find a way out of the trouble. But he remarked that it was not in his province to advise. When his Majesty should please to do something, he should be happy to show that it had been well done.

"Sirrah!" stormed the King, "why did I fail to cope with you varlet?"

"Sire," replied the Lord-Biographer, "he is doubtless some powerful Magician against whose power none can prevail."

The King was well pleased with this solution, and he retired to make it into a maxim.

The Queen hastened to the Princess to reason with her; but the Princess would not hear reason.

"You have always promised that I should marry the Greatest," she said. "Can your Prince make the snow melt, and the flowers grow?"

"Crazy pate!" cried her mother, "words are wasted on you. You are bewitched. But, magic or not, to-morrow we start on our journey; and, meanwhile, your beggar shall be well watched and guarded."

The Princess only answered "Nobody shall part me from my minstrel."

The next day there was a great cry made in the Palace. Neither the Princess nor the beggar could be found. In spite of the guards, the barred gates, and the sentinels, the minstrel had carried off his prize.

Then the King and Queen clothed themselves in deep mourning, and set out for the kingdom of Amor, to divert and appease him, and to implore his aid in recovering their daughter.

The minstrel had borne away the Princess while all the world slept; but outside the city walls he found an old crone, leaning on a crutch, who stopped them in their way, and croaked in a voice like a corn-crake's.

"Oh, ho, my Princess, you have me to thank for your husband."

Then, with a malignant laugh, she mounted her crutch, and flitted away over the plain like a bat.

The Princess trembled with terror.

"They will follow us; they will take me back," she whispered.

"We go a way they cannot follow," returned her companion, as he drew a milk-white steed from the shadow of the gateway, sprang into the saddle, and lifted the Princess up before him.

Then the horse spread mighty wings, and carried them up through the snow-clouds, until the earth looked like a speck far below.

There, blue waves of ether bore them softly as a summer sea. The air was mild and balmy, and radiant with the light of suns and stars.

The Princess looked and listened in tranquil wonder, while her companion pointed out to her the ruddy cliffs of Mars, the sapphire heights of Hesperus, and that fair side of the Moon, unknown upon earth, whence flows the misty stream that laps the emerald islands of the Milky Way.

When they began to descend through the saffron lining of the clouds, sleep came upon her, and she knew no more until the hoofs of the charger chimed against the ground in front of a mighty mansion.

Almost before she had opened her eyes, she was lifted from the horse and borne into a vast saloon, where light from a hundred cressets dazzled her sight.

Then, when she gazed around, a great fear seized her. She fell on her knees and cried aloud:

"This is the Palace of Amor!"

"Ah, my Princess," said her companion, "do you know my Palace again, although you did not remember me?" As he spoke his old clothing fell from him, and he stood before her in the shining armor of the Prince.

Great was the amazement of the King and Queen, on their arrival at the Palace, to find that the Beggar and the Prince were one.

Great was the joy of the people to have their rightful King again, and to see his stern sister return to her closet.

The wedding was celebrated without delay, and all the good Fairies came as guests, bringing gifts and benisons.

But when the old Witch heard of it, she broke her broomstick in her rage, and was powerless ever afterwards.

THE LADY IN WHITE.

BY HENRY FRITH.

I ANNOUNCE myself to the reader as the "Man who Believes in Ghosts—perhaps. At any rate I believe in my father, and he believed the story I am about to relate.

My father resided at Ipswich, and once had occasion to go to the city upon business. It was during a period of great popular commotion, and the city being very full, he had some trouble in finding lodging.

The master of the house observed that it was a good large room—for he could get but one—and very comfortable, if he did not mind—but there he stopped, for his wife gave him a nudge.

That made my father suspect something was not quite right.

"It isn't over a slaughter-house, or a burial-ground, or a dissecting-room, is it?" says he.

"Oh, dear, no!" says the landlord; "but some people say the next house is haunted, and that anybody who sleeps in this room can see a lady in white crying at that window that you can see there."

"Oh, is that all?" says my father. "Perhaps that's some poor maniac confined there. Whether or no, however, that's no objection, for I don't care a rush for all the ghosts that ever were invented!"

Well, he took possession of the room, and before night closed in he had an opportunity of taking an accurate survey of the neighboring premises.

A lead roof, apparently over a workshop, between his window and that one where the ghost was said to appear; only there was this difference—that he could easily step from his room upon the leads, whereas the neighbor's was about nine or ten feet higher.

My father always vowed that he was perfectly sober when he went to bed.

He couldn't tell how long he had been asleep, when he was suddenly awakened by loud screams; and when he opened his eyes he saw the opposite house was on fire!

He was out on the leads in a moment.

The haunted room was filled with bright flames, and at the window stood a lovely young woman, clasping a baby in her arms, and screaming for help.

"Oh, save my child! save my child!" she kept on crying in tones of such anguish that they went to my father's very heart.

"Give it to me," he said, "and then jump out into my arms. The distance is nothing; you cannot be hurt. Take courage! Now give me the baby!"

She leaned forward, and dropped the baby, wrapped up in a shawl, into my father's arms. Just as he got safe, it seemed to him that the roof fell in.

There was a crashing noise, but not very loud; the flames disappeared, and so did the young lady.

In at his window he rushed again, and through the house, shouting, "Fire, fire!" with all his might, and with the baby still in his arms.

Out rushed the landlord as pale as a ghost, and his wife after him in such a monument of a nightcap, that it quite overawed my father even in the midst of his agitation.

The maid was shrieking "Murder!" down in the kitchen, and the apprentices had tumbled out from under the counter in the shop, and were poking their noses cautiously out, and kindly inquiring who was killing her; and on every landing up the stairs the lodgers were calling out to know what was the matter. There was altogether a terrific row in the place.

"The next house is on fire!" said my father.

"It's only the old story," said the landlord. "Run up-stairs, my dear, and tell them it's a false alarm."

"But it is not a false alarm," says my father; "for I saw the flames, and I saw the roof fall in, and I fear that a lady is buried under the ruins. Why don't you come and help her? She had just dropped her child into my arms when the roof fell."

The landlady then first set eyes on the bundle, for her husband at that moment lighted a candle from the rushlight, which had very imperfectly lighted the scene before.

"A baby!" says she.

"Yes," says my father; "and I think I'd better leave it with you, ma'am, while I go and endeavor to rescue the mother."

The woman did not speak, nor utter a sound; but she just lifted up the shawl from the child's face, and dropped down like a lump of lead upon the floor.

Instead of attending to her, both my father and the landlord looked into the shawl. It contained the skeleton of an infant, wrapped up in the rags of what had once been very costly garments.

My father felt very sick, and the landlord staggered back against the wall, and dropped the candlestick out of his hand.

When the landlady fell (she was a tall, hearty woman, and gave the house a good shake) the maid screamed "Murder!" louder than ever, and the lodgers called out yet more energetically to know what was the matter.

That frightened the landlord back into his senses; for he thought if they come down and saw what my father had got, it would frighten them all out of the house.

So he caught up the candle, which luckily was not extinguished by the fall, and pushed my father, with his bundle, into the bedroom.

Then he called out that it was only the strange gentleman had had the nightmare, and his wife had been frightened into a fainting fit.

The little skeleton was quietly buried next day by an old sexton, who asked no questions, as he knew the landlord was a respectable householder; and so they all concluded that the ghost was satisfied, and that that was the reason why she never appeared again.

When my father examined the place closely by daylight, he saw evident marks of a fire that had happened there a great many years before.

In short, the whole affair of the apparition seemed to shroud some fearful mystery which was perfectly inexplicable.

Some years after, when he was in the city again, my father endeavored to find out the house in the hope of obtaining a clue to the mystery, but he could discover nothing but a mass of ruins. The street and some others were just demolished.

CATCHING BIRDS.—Here is a plan adopted by the peasants on the French side of the Pyrenees for the capture of the flocks of birds of passage which at certain periods of years pass through the country which they inhabit, and generally for taking all kinds of birds that fly in flocks through the part of Europe. It is customary for the inhabitants of the villages to combine together to erect a number of tripods, which rise to a height superior to that of any of the trees in the neighborhood, and on the top of each is placed a hunter, provided with a sort of kite in the shape of a sparrow-hawk. At some considerable distance from the tripods are a number of nets, suspended between the trees so as to form a vertical wall of network, rising to a height of thirty, forty, fifty, or sixty feet and upwards. Upon the ground, in a little hut, is another hunter, lying at full length, and peering through a small hole left in the front of his shelter-place.

As soon as a flock of birds is described, it is allowed to get between the line of tripods and the nets, when first one hunter and then another launches out from him his sparrow-hawk kite, which he draws back by the cord which retains it, launching it out again and again as occasion may require. At the same time the whole body of hunters raise a chorus of the most unearthly cries. Frightened by the din, and the sparrow-hawks floating over them, the flock of birds gradually descend lower and lower, until by skilled manœuring they are made to alight just beneath the vertical nets. Now is the time for the gentleman in the shelter-hut. He lets go the cord which retain the nets in position, the nets fall forward upon the frightened birds, and they are caught.

You can't tell the nature of a girl from the way she looks. We knew one once who looked meeker than two lambs before she was married, who tried to pitch her husband out of the second-story window a week after.

SEVERAL of the leading business men of Farmington, Mass., blacked up with burnt cork and gave a minstrel show recently to raise money for the purchase of a town clock.

TOWARD THE SEA.

I saw two women standing on a hill
That looked toward the sea. The face of one
Was worn and seamed with care, yet calm and still,
Like one whose work is done.

The other's face was young and fresh and fair,
And yet within her heart there seemed to be
Some sorrow, giving her a pensive air,
As she looked out to sea.

They looked not at the wind-blown flowers that lay
About their feet, but followed with their eyes
A stately vessel sailing on her way,
Where billows fall and rise.

The maiden, though her face bespoke her grief
At parting from her lover, yet seemed fain
To lull her sorrow with the fond belief
That they would meet again.

Not so the other, for her trembling lip
Told that she thought that she had lost her son;
That ere again those waters knew his ship,
Her life's voyage would be done.

They waved their kerchiefs, thinking they could see
An answering signal from the vessel's deck;
Then watched the ship until it seemed to be
Only a distant speck.

They watched it out of sight, then turned away
With heavy steps and heavier hearts, and hands
Locked in each other's, while the twilight gray
Settled upon the lands.

But as they slowly took their homeward path
From either heart went up a silent prayer
That heaven would arrest the tempest's wrath,
And our dear sailor spare.

O, ship, receding 'twixt the waves and skies,
Swift be thy going, swift thy coming be;
Gladdening his mother's and his sweetheart's eyes
As they look out to sea.

A JAPANESE LADY.

A description of the life led by a Japanese lady before the introduction of European customs into Japan, may, perhaps, interest our readers.

When a young lady entered the world, she was immediately bathed, and then for thirty days remained unencumbered with clothes. On the thirty-first day she was dressed and carried to the temple to be christened. Having received her name, the priest presented her with a shell of paint, which was considered an emblem of beauty. Her clothes were then removed, and for three months she remained in this unconfined state in order to give full scope for the development of her limbs.

At the expiration of that period another religious ceremony was gone through, and the infant was bound round the waist with a girdle and taught to pray. When old enough she was sent to an inferior school, and, no matter how aristocratic or wealthy her parents were, was clothed most shabbily, to prevent the noxious effects of admiration which rich dress might excite.

Having completed her elementary education, the girl attended a superior seminary, where she underwent thorough instruction in good breeding, the minutest laws of etiquette, and the various forms of behavior towards persons of different ranks.

Needlework, all kinds of ornamental work, and household management, were subjects deemed necessary for all ladies to understand, also a knowledge of the almanac was essential, since it was considered disastrous to take any important step on an unpropitious day. At the age of fifteen she was removed from school, and then regarded as eligible for marriage.

The manner of wooing was somewhat peculiar. A branch was placed by the suitor outside the house of the father, and, if the maiden were willing, the branch was taken in, and she blackened her teeth. Practically the choice was vested in her father, and implicit obedience to his command was expected.

When parents agreed to have their children united, male friends on the bridegroom's side, and female on the bride's, were appointed as marriage brokers, and terms were arranged. The lady then received presents from her *fiancé*, which she offered to her parents in acknowledgement of their kindness during her infancy, and of the pains bestowed upon her education. Thus, she was in reality sold to the highest bidder, as the father took care to accept as son-in-law the man who could afford to make the most costly presents.

After this, the toys used by the girl in childhood were unceremoniously burnt, and a handsome trousseau was given to her by her parents, also several articles of furniture, among which were invariably a spinning-wheel and a loom.

On the wedding-day the bridal equipment was conveyed with great pomp to the house of the bridegroom, and there exhibited. The marriage ceremony consisted in the prayers and benedictions of the priest, accompanied by a formal kindling of torches. A torch held by the bride was lit, and from this the bridegroom lighted another, and the pair were pronounced man and wife. The nuptial knot being tied, the bride was attired in white, to typify her purity, and covered from head to foot with a white veil. This veil was her bridal shroud, implying that from henceforth she was dead to her family, and belonged wholly to her husband.

In this attire she was placed in a palanquin and carried forth, escorted by the marriage brokers, her family, and the friends invited to the wedding feast; the men in their dress of ceremony, the women in flower-pictured robes edged with gold. The procession paraded through the town, and then proceeded to the house of the bridegroom, where the bride was led by two girls, playmates of her youth, into the state-room. Three days afterwards the bride and bridegroom paid their respects to the former's family, and this ended the wedding ceremony.

The wife now plucked out her eyebrows, and was thenceforth regarded as the absolute property of the husband.

A Japanese wife had no legal rights, and her evidence was not admitted in a court of justice. Under no circumstance could she demand separation from her husband. She was treated by him more as a toy than as a rational partner of his life, and was expected to amuse and cheer him by her conversation and accomplishments, but not to interfere in his business matters or participate in his anxieties and cares.

A lady often wore as many as twenty gowns at one time, but of so fine a texture as not to weigh more than five pounds. The dress was of different colors, and frequently adorned with flowers of gold. A belt was worn of such length as to go twice round the waist, and tied in a knot with many ends and bows. The knot was very conspicuous, and indicated whether the wearer was married or single, the former having it before, the latter behind. The hair, arranged in a sort of turban, was adorned with flowers and ribbons, and bodkins of gold, silver, or tortoise-shell were stuck through it.

Lately the Japs have become very European in their notions and fashions, but many of these old customs and manners are still retained.

Grains of Gold.

Circumstance is the occasion of vice.

Reflection is a flower of the mind, giving out wholesome fragrance.

Every man's ability may be strengthened or increased by culture.

When a great man stoops or trips, the small men around him suddenly become greater.

Praises are valuable only when they come from lips that have the courage to condemn.

Do not lose courage by considering your own imperfections, but instantly set about remedying them.

We may make angels of our own tender and kind and loving thoughts and feelings by letting them fly to others.

Never fear to bring the sublimest motive to the smallest duty, and the most infinite comfort to the smallest trouble.

What stubbing, ploughing, digging and harrowing are to land, thinking, reflecting and examining are to the mind.

The irresolute seize with eagerness all overtures which show them two roads, and which, in consequence, do not press them to choose.

He that sympathizes in all the happiness of others, enjoys the safest happiness; and he that is warned by the folly of others, has attained the soundest wisdom.

A cucumber is bitter: throw it away. There are briers in the road: turn aside from them. This is enough. Do not ask, and why are such things made in the world?

The head truly enlightened will presently have a wonderful influence in purifying the heart, and the heart really affected with goodness will conduce to the directing of the head.

The human mind is always inexorable in demanding a motive for all human actions. It is only himself that each man permits to act without one, and avails himself of the privilege with astonishing frequency.

Talk about those subjects you have had long in your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber should not be much used till they are seasoned.

Consistency is an acquired habit, and of slow growth. The conditions necessary for its acquisition are right and fixed principles of faith and morals, sincerity, simplicity, singleness of aim, contentment, high temper enough not to be trifled with, honest pride, temperance and fortitude.

Femininities.

She neglects her heart who studies her glass.

An umbrella with a pistol at the end of the handle has been invented.

The number of female doctors in the United States borders on 2,500.

A Boston woman who invented a corset has made $50,000 in three years.

A widow in Wilton, Conn., says she never intends to marry again. She is 104.

A mirror on the back of a coachman's coat is the latest fashionable dodge.

A woman may be true as steel, but then, you know, some steel is highly tempered.

Mrs. Hayes and Miss Cleveland is the Presidential ticket nominated for 1888 by a Buffalo paper.

A Georgia man tried to cut the cords in the feet of his daughter so that she could not imperil her soul by dancing.

A foolish Iowa maiden attempted to change the color of her eyes, but succeeded only in ruining their usefulness.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed a young schoolgirl, when she first beheld a cucumber, "I always thought they grew in slices."

In the novels produced during the past year it is estimated that 372 of the heroines have been blondes, and only 100 brunettes.

Ninety per cent. of the Chicago ladies show their tongues while walking, the prevalent style being to roll the tip just a trifle over the lower lip.

The deep, dark plot of a Baltimore girl was to mix some chemical with the rouge used by a rival, so that it would turn her cheeks black indelibly instead of pink.

A woman who had been fourteen years in the service of Queen Victoria was convicted at Middlesex Sessions, recently, and sent to prison for two months for theft.

A California girl is not beautiful, nor does she possess an inexhaustible wardrobe, but she has conquered the leadership of a summer resort by harnessing a pair of zebras to her phaeton.

In the East they close and darken their houses except at night, and so keep cool; but the American housewife knows more about such matters than mere heathen who feed their girl babies to the crocodiles.

Beauty is the true prerogative of women, and so peculiarly their own, that our sex, though naturally requiring another sort of feature, is never in its lustre but when puerile and beardless, confused and mixed with theirs.

Placards denouncing the present style of female apparel as "more in harmony with votaries of the shrine of Babel than the humble penitent seeking peace with God," have been posted on all the churches of Norfolk, Va.

A woman, aged 78, arrived in Newark, N. J., recently, from St. Louis, Mo., having "footed" it, so she says, the entire distance. She was on her way to Trenton to join her husband. A ticket to her destination was given her.

"Miss de Silva has a very harsh and unpleasant voice, don't you think so?" observed Anger. "Very," replied Gimlet; "but she is so eccentric it will not do her any harm." "Eccentric—how so?" "She never tries to sing."

A St. Paul, Minn., shop-girl was discharged from her position in a fashionable glove store, because her hands were so small and shapely as to make the lady patrons so envious that they would not allow her to wait upon them.

The daughters of the Prince of Wales are brought up in the most simple manner. The three sisters occupy one large bedroom, furnished very plainly. They lead so quiet a life that they are still children, although the eldest is seventeen.

In speaking of a newly-wedded pair, a gentleman said of the husband: "The trouble with John is, he has no mind of his own." "Oh, that will make no difference; Sarah will always be ready to give him a piece of hers," responded the lady.

The Princess of Wales is troubled with (but, oh! breathe it to no one it opens, but they do not hurt her half so much as the reflection that she will be the innocent cause of many thousands of American girls tottering about on their uppers in the latest English fashion.

A hint to music publishers is to be found in the fact that American girls in the large cities will buy any songs or musical compositions that have been written by an English aristocrat, male or female, but especially female. A song or waltz by a Countess is particularly irresistible.

The correct thing in parasols is to carry them firmly held in both hands, straight up and down before the fair bearers' noses, at a distance of about an inch. The style was derived from the pictures in the English illustrated papers of the Princess of Wales' Irish journey.

A window-sill in the upper part of her house was the place chosen recently by a Bridgeport, Conn., woman to lay her sleeping infant. She closed the blinds, but that did not prove a safeguard, they blowing open, and the infant falling to the sidewalk, receiving injuries that will in all probability cause its death.

Young housekeeper: "My husband says you charge too much for your ice. It ought to be cheaper, we had such an uncommonly cold winter." Old ice man—"Yes'm; but you see you gets more for your money." Young housekeeper—"How so?" Old ice man—"It's frix so tight, mum, that the ice is uncommonly solider." Young housekeeper—"Oh, I see! I'll tell my husband."

Poor young artist (displaying a picture): "That is an exact copy, madame, of Raphael's 'Madonna,' which, you remember, sold for $125,000." Madame—"And how much do you ask for this picture?" Poor young artist—"Two dollars and a quarter." Madame—"What is the cause of such a wide difference in price?" Poor young artist—"Competition, madame. The business is not what it used to be."

Masculinities.

Always be square.

Tennyson and Ruskin are ardent chess-players.

Rossini wrote one of his finest operas in bed, and was too lazy to pick up a sheet that had fallen away.

Rules for pic nics: 1st. Do not take more than one girl. 2d. Do not take any girl. 3d. Do not go to the pic-nic.

A man who some time ago married "an angel," says it is about as complete a faith cure as anything he has heard of.

A grain of sand may be the germ of a new world, but a button in the right place does more good in the rushing present.

You often hear of a man being in "advance of his age," but you never hear of a woman being in the same predicament.

A young bride having been asked how her husband turned out, replied that he turned out very late in the morning and turned in very late at night.

A South Carolinian bears the following name: Benjamin Bathurst Benbow William Henry Jeremiah Andrew Jackson Stago Simon Peter George Washington Johnson.

Of the $2,000,000 left by a New York man for the establishment of a college of music, it is said that but $2,000 remains, the rest having been consumed in litigation.

It is only the bride who is given away at a wedding. It seems to be taken for granted that the youthful bridegroom has given himself away many times before the day of the ceremony.

A charity sermon was once commenced by a Dean of St. Paul's, thus: "Benevolence is a sentiment common to human nature: A. never sees B. in distress without wishing C. to relieve him."

A good deal has been said about the patience of Job, but think of poor Mrs. Job! A husband with one boil is bad enough, but a husband covered with them requires a heroic woman to take care of him.

The Emperor of Germany shed tears when he kissed Bismarck. If the pictures of Bismarck correctly represent his face, we do not blame the Emperor of Germany. It was enough to make a stronger man weep.

"Oh, dear," yawned a little boy after he had returned from church, "I don't wonder the world is so full of wickedness." "Why so?" asked his astonished mother. "'Cause God picked out such a tedious day for Sunday."

In the East the husband calls his wife after her first son, and the wife the husband after the same manner. If their first born be named Joseph, they address each other as "Mother of Joseph," and "Father of Joseph," respectively.

A Chicago girl died suddenly from eating too much ice-cream and strawberries at a pic-nic, recently. No well-regulated young man will allow himself to be found at a pic-nic this summer without a copy of this paragraph pasted in his hat.

A paper published at Irwintown, Ga., contains this personal: "Miss Minnie Pickett will leave for her home in Lumpkin on next Friday. She leaves a good many men in this community to mourn her loss. Their loss will be her eternal gain."

That profound philosopher, Josh Billings, says: "There is a great deal of religion in this world that is like a life preserver—only put on at the moment of immediate danger, and then half the time put on hind side before." Josh hits it every time.

Little Johnnie and Mary were sitting on an ottoman in rather close quarters. Both realized the crowded condition of affairs, and it was finally righted by Johnnie, who said: "Mary, there would be more room for me on this ottoman if one of us were to get off."

"How does it happen that there are so many old maids among the school-teachers?" asked a reporter of a school superintendent the other day. "Because school-teachers are, as a rule, women of sense, and few women will give up a $30 position for a $10 man," was the reply.

"My dear," said Mrs. Jones, at the breakfast table, "I see it cost a man in New York $10,000 to get a divorce from a Boston woman. What do you think of that?" "I think it was cheap," replied Jones. And the meal was finished in silence. Mrs. Jones was a Boston woman herself.

"Do you know," said a bashful swain to his sweetheart, "that doctors say there is danger of contracting diseases by kissing?" "So they say," she murmured. "Do you believe it?" "Well, I haven't much faith in doctors," she replied, blushing furiously; "besides, I've been vaccinated."

Miss Wilkins was a beautiful blonde, and she wanted to go to Saratoga—so she told her mother—to look for something particular for her dear papa. "And what is it, pray," asked her mother, "that you wish to find so much for your dear papa?" "A son-in-law," was the gentle reply of the blushing maiden.

There is such a thing as being smothered in honey. A Kansas man recently drew a big prize in a lottery, and the very same day his wife had twins—both boys—his mother-in-law was struck by lightning while in transit to pay him a visit, and a man who owed him nine dollars for ten years sent along the money.

A bashful young man who was afraid to propose to his sweetheart, induced her to fire at him with a pistol, which he assured her was only loaded with powder, and, after she had done so, fell down and pretended to be dead. She threw herself wildly upon the bed, calling him her darling and her beloved, whereupon he got up and married her.

In Russia a conscript is rejected if his chest does not measure at least half the length of his stature. To avoid conscription, the device is frequently resorted to of reducing the chest-measure by semi-starvation and other tricks. In one quarter only of a small district of Bashkiry there were 180 men disqualified on this account out of 500, and it was found afterward that those rejected had recovered their sound condition, and measured even more than was necessary.

The German Prince.

BY HENRY FRITH.

MRS. LAURENCE JESSAMY and her husband—but that is an afterthought—lived in a small but very smart house in Berkeley Street.

It was dark-red, and not at all dingy, and had blue-tiled flower-boxes in the windows.

The curtains were spotless in spite of blacks, and there was a general air of dainty cheerfulness pervading even the exterior of the dwelling which inspired the casual passer-by with a desire to penetrate beyond the pretty stained-glass of the front door.

Mrs. Jessamy was well known amongst what the papers would call "the *elite*," and was somewhat celebrated as a constant purveyor of novelties.

The fact that there *was* generally something new to be found in the tiny drawing-rooms of the dark-red house in Berkeley street was no small inducement to the jaded votaries of fashion to congregate there.

As to Mr. Jessamy, he was not aggressive in any way. When he married, he did so with the laudable intention of being guided by her whom he had chosen for her superior worldly wisdom and general cleverness.

He was a dutiful husband—always at hand when Mrs. Jessamy required him, never to be found when his room was preferred to his company.

He belonged to a club, where he spent a good deal of his spare time—and most of his time was spare.

The source of his income was unknown; but nobody is over-curious as to how a man came by the means of giving a dinner—nobody, at least, who is asked to help in the eating of it.

Mrs. Jessamy was always dressed with taste and elegance. There was an atmosphere of luxury and refinement about her and her surroundings which argued the existence of something much more substantial.

No infant Jessamys blessed the lot of this happy pair, and perhaps it was better that it was so, for besides there being no room in the house for a family, neither parent could have bestowed much time or attention on the rearing of their offspring, since the demands of the club and the drawing-room left little leisure for homelier pursuits.

One morning in February, the husband and wife sat in the breakfast-room. Mr. Jessamy was eating his final morsel of toast, and his better half was scanning the pages of the morning paper.

"How I wish the season would begin!" she exclaimed presently.

"So it will soon, won't it?" mumbled Laurence through the toast.

"Things are so dull," she went on, as if he had not spoken. "I haven't had one celebrity here all the winter. People will be forgetting us."

"You forget that black fellow—that native missionary," said Jessamy, kindly.

"And what sort of a success was he? You know he offended the Duchess dreadfully, telling him that only unconverted women in his country painted their faces. She has never been here since."

Jessamy chuckled gleefully.

"By Jove! what a snort the old girl gave, and how she had laid it on! She turned pale with rage behind the paint."

These reminiscences seemed to amuse Mrs. Jessamy less than they did her husband.

She still looked pensive, and turned her attention to the paper again. Presently she said—

"I see that Prince Ludwig of Saxe-Schweitzenburg is coming over. What a card he would be if we knew him!"

"I do know him very well," said Mr. Jessamy. "Went to school with him in Germany."

"What!" cried his wife, with unusual abruptness. "You know a prince, and never told me?"

"Yes, I never thought anything of him. It's easy enough to get him if you think it worth while."

Mrs. Jessamy clasped her hands in much ecstacy.

"Worth while? Why, it's the very thing I need."

"Then you shall have him," said Jessamy with the indulgent tone of a parent promising a new toy to a rather captious child.

Peace reigned in the little red house in Berkeley Street. Jessamy was as good as his word.

The prince arrived. Jessamy hastened to pay his respects, and his Highness, who never forgot a face, and had liked his old schoolfellow in years gone by, received him with simple cordiality.

Jessamy ventured to express a wish that he might receive Prince Ludwig under his humble roof.

The prince consulted his adjutant, a tall, soldierly-looking man, who spoke English like a native, and presently said that he had an afternoon in the following week unoccupied which he would willingly spend in taking tea with Mrs. Jessamy.

Jessamy strode home with the step and bearing of a conqueror. For once it was he and not his wife, who had perpetrated a clever act, and now she must begin to admire her capacity for managing a delicate affair. He found Mrs. Jessamy alone over her tea-table.

"Well, Isabel; invite your duchesses!" he cried, gaily, as he entered the room.

She looked. The fire of excited hope burned in her eyes.

"What do you mean?" she asked, very eagerly.

"I mean that Prince Ludwig of Saxe-Schweitzenburg is coming to tea next Wednesday!"

* * * * * * *

All went well. Mrs. Jessamy wrote a pretty purring little note to her "dear Duchess," asking her to come and meet his Highness, who is an "old friend of my husband's."

The dear Duchess, for reasons best known to herself, decided to overlook the result of the native missionary, and graciously accepted the invitation.

Her Grace, in her turn, became the bait which caught many other guests, less distinguished, perhaps, but all of undoubted fashion; and by Tuesday evening the happy and hopeful Mrs. Jessamy had made out as pretty a list of notables as one would be apt to meet anywhere in the city.

She retired early for a beauty-sleep, for she was resolved to look her best on the morrow.

"Only tell me," she said, "what is he like? What am I to expect?"

"Oh! very ordinary; more like your aunt's Austrian butler than anyone I know," said the unimaginative Jessamy.

With this answer she was forced to be content.

The next day preparations were early commenced. Every vase in the reception-rooms was filled with fragrant flowers. The silver of the tea-equipage was polished till it reflected surrounding objects as in a mirror.

The lamps were carefully trimmed and filled. Mrs. Jessamy's maid re-crimped her mistress's fringe, and laid out on the bed a tea-gown—a dream of olive velvet and shrimp-pink satin, enough to make the "dear Duchess" mad with envy. It was half-past three, and at five Prince Ludwig of Saxe-Schweitzenburg would arrive.

Mrs. Jessamy stood in a flowing white dressing-gown before her mirror, anxiously studying her charming features.

Mr. Jessamy suddenly entered, with an annoyed look on his face and an open letter in his hand.

"Something unfortunate has happened," he said.

"What is it? Tell me at once."

"Prince Ludwig has been taken suddenly ill and can't come. It is very vexatious!"

"Vexatious! It is ruinous! Don't you see, you great stupid! that this is the last of us? What are we to do?"

She put her hands to her head and turned pale.

"Tell them all the truth," said the simple-minded Jessamy.

She turned on him scornfully.

"And will they believe it, do you think? Not they! I'd rather die than have that old Jezebel triumph over me. Now leave me alone for a quarter of an hour. I want to consider."

Her husband crept from her presence with an awe-struck expression of countenance and the letter from the adjutant crumpled up in his hand.

Mrs. Jessamy paced wildly up and down the room. Presently a short, defiant laugh escaped her.

"Here, Laurence!" she called.

When he came she drew his head down and whispered in his ear.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "It's too great a risk."

"It's the last resource," she said, impressively. "Do as I tell you. Run to auntie's as fast as you can."

As he had always been in the habit of obeying her, it had become second nature, and he did so now.

By five o'clock the fragrant lamp-lit drawing-rooms began to fill. The Duchess, looking, as some irreverent youth told her, "as fresh as paint," came smiling in, and found her hostess standing near the fire with the prince.

Prince Ludwig of Saxe-Schweitzenburg was not as soldierly-looking a man as one might have expected.

He had less the appearance of a colonel of Hussars than that of a humdrum, respectable German civilian.

But that might have been because he had taken advantage of his absence from home to don an ordinary frock coat, instead of the uniform which was imperative in his own country.

He was singularly shy and answered most of the attentions lavished on him by a circle of admiring ladies by a Malvolio-like smile, somewhat inane and stereotyped. Once one of the ladies dropped her muff, and he dived for it in a most unlooked-for manner.

The shy damsel summoned up all the German she knew, which seemed to please him, for he blushed all over his gentle, sheepish face.

He was disposed to make himself useful. Mrs. Jessamy was obliged to positively restrain him when the tea arrived, to prevent his assisting the footman in handing the cups.

His hostess had a pale, anxious look which did not escape the "dear Duchess."

"Never look worried, my love," purred the old lady in her ear; "it quite spoils everything. These crumpets are excellent. Don't have his Highness so much on your mind."

"I am so glad your Grace enjoys them," answered the martyr, without flinching. "I am anxious you should be amused, that is all."

The prince was behaving in rather an extraordinary manner. He resisted every effort to draw him out, and took refuge in silence.

When a new-comer was presented to him he would bow and scrape, and seem to lose his head altogether.

"He has not the repose of manner that his father had," observed the Duchess, surveying him through her glasses. "Delightful man, old Saxe-Schweitzenburg. No resemblance whatever. Seems to me, though, I have seen him somewhere before."

The lace at Mrs. Jessamy's throat palpitated.

"Nothing more likely," she said. "He has been in the city for some days."

Just then everyone's attention was attracted to the other side of the room. His Highness uttered a wild exclamation in German, with a strong Austrian accent, the door opened, and discovered two noble, erect forms on the threshold, while the well-trained tones of Mrs. Jessamy's footman proudly announced—

"His Highness Prince Ludwig of Saxe-Schweitzenburg!"

* * * * * *

The little red house in Berkeley Street is to let this season.

CLEVER CROWS.—While treading "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan," Miss Bird found the silence broken in many places by the discordant notes of thousands of crows, who were both sagacious and impudent. She says—

"Five of them were so impudent as to alight on two of my horses, and so be ferried across the river. In the inn garden I saw a dog eating a piece of carrion in the presence of several of these very covetous birds.

"They evidently said a good deal to each other on the subject, and now and then one or two of them tried to pull the meat away from him, which he resented.

"At last a big, strong crow succeeded in tearing off a piece, with which he returned to the pine where the others were congregated.

"After much earnest speech they all surrounded the dog, and the leading bird dexterously dropped the small piece of meat within reach of his mouth.

"He immediately snapped at it, letting go the big piece unwisely for a second, on which two of the crows flew away with it to the pine, and with much fluttering and hilarity they all ate, or rather gorged, it, the deceived dog looking vacant and bewildered for a moment, after which he sat under the tree and barked at them insanely.

"A gentleman told me that he saw a dog holding a piece of meat in like manner in the presence of three crows, which also vainly tried to tear it from him.

"After a consultation they separated, two going as near as they dared to the meat, while the third gave the tail a bite sharp enough to make the dog turn round with a squeal, on which the other villains seized the meat, and the three fed triumphantly upon it on the top of a wall.

"In many places they are so aggressive as to destroy crops, unless they are protected by netting. They assemble on the sore backs of horses and pick them into holes, and are mischievous in many ways.

"They are very late in going to roost, and are early astir in the morning, and are so bold that they often came 'with many a stately flirt and flutter' into the veranda where I was sitting.

"I never watched an assemblage of them for any length of time without being convinced that there was a Nestor among them to lead their movements.

"Along the sea-shore they are very amusing, for they 'take the air' in the evening, seated on sand-banks facing the wind, with their mouths open."

EVERY vice fights against virtue.

A Daily Defalcation.

The Hon. John Kelly, the head and front of Tammany Hall, a man of strict integrity, an indefatigable worker, early at his office, late to leave, so burdened with business that regular meals were seldom known by him, with mind in constant tension and energies steadily trained, finally broke down!

The wonder is that he did not sooner give way. An honest man in all things else, he acted unfairly with his physical resources. He was ever drawing upon this bank without ever depositing a collateral. The account overdrawn, the bank suspends and both are now in the hands of medical receivers.

It is not work that kills men. It is irregularity of habits and mental worry. No man in good health frets at his work. Bye and bye when the bank of vigor suspends, these men will wonder how it all happened, and they will keep wondering until their dying day unless, perchance, some candid physician or interested friend will point out to them how by irregularity, by excessive mental effort, by constant worry and fret, by plunging in deeper than they had a right to go, they have produced that loss of nervous energy which almost invariably expresses itself in a deranged condition of the kidneys and liver, for it is a well-known fact that the poison which the kidneys and liver should remove from the blood, if left therein, soon knocks the life out of the strongest and most vigorous man or woman. Daily building up of these vital organs by so wonderful and highly reputed a specific as Warner's safe cure, is the only guarantee that our business men can have that their strength will be equal to the labors daily put upon them.

Mr. Kelly has nervous dyspepsia, we learn, indicating, as we have said, a breakdown of nerve force. His case should be a warning to others who pursuing a like course, will certainly reach a like result.—*The Sunday Herald.*

Take all in all.

—*Take* all the Kidneys and Liver *Medicines.*

—Take all the *Blood* purifiers,

—Take all the *Dyspepsia* and Indigestion *cures,*

—Take all the *Ague,* Fever and bilious *specifics.*

—Take alll the *Brain* and Nerve force *revives.*

—Take all the *Great* health restorers.

In short, take all the best qualities of all these and the—*best,*

—*Qualities* of all the best medicines in the world, and you will find that—*Hop*

—*Bitters* have the best curative qualities and powers of all—*concentrated* in them,

—And that they will cure when any or all of these, singly or—*combined.* Fail!!!!

—A thorough trial will give positive proof of this.

Hardened Liver.

Five years ago I broke down with kidney and liver complaint and rheumatism.

Since then I have been unable to be about at all. My liver became hard like wood; my limbs were puffed up and filled with water.

All the best physicians agreed that nothing could cure me. I resolved to try Hop Bitters; I have used seven bottles; the hardness has all gone from my liver, the swelling from my limbs, and it has *worked a miracle* in my case; otherwise I would have been now in my grave.

J. W. MORRY, Buffalo, Oct. 1, 1881.

Poverty and Suffering.

"I was dragged down with debt, poverty and suffering for years, caused by a sick family and large bills for doctoring.

I was completely discouraged, until one year ago, by the advice of my pastor, I commenced using Hop Bitters, and in one month we were all well, and none of us have seen a sick day since, and I want to say to all poor men, you can keep your families well a year with Hop Bitters for less than one doctor's visit will cost. I know it."

—A WORKINGMAN.

☞None genuine without a bunch of green Hops on the white label. Shun all the vile, poisonous stuff with "Hop" or "Hops" in their name.

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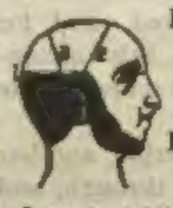

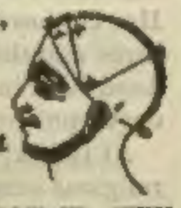

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Instructions to enable Ladies and Gentlemen to measure their own heads with accuracy:

FOR WIGS, INCHES.	TOUPEES AND SCALPS, INCHES.
No. 1. The round of the head.	No. 1. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck.	No. 2. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.	No. 3. Over the crown of the head.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.	

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100 Fine Cards and Scrap Pictures and elegant finger Ring 10c. Clinton Bros., Clintonville, Ct.

Recent Book Issues.

Drs. Starkey & Palen, the originators of Compound Oxygen for lung complaints, having removed to 1529 Arch St., have issued a neat little book giving a history of this remarkable remedy which will be sent to anyone on application.

Pierce's Business College of this city have published in very pretty pamphlet form the reports of its annual commencements for 1884 & 85. As souvenirs reading matter or works of art, they are alike praiseworthy.

"Theo" is a sprightly love story, written by Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, author of "That Lass of Lowrie's," and is one of the very best and purest as well as one of the most charming novels ever published. Few characters in modern fiction are as lovable as the noble, warm-hearted impulsive girl, from whom this novel takes its name. She dares everything for the man she loves, with a self-sacrifice that for once at least has its reward. T. B. Peterson & Brothers, Publishers.

Godey's Lady's Book, the oldest publication of its kind in America, for August is out early and as usual embraces much of interest and value to its special class. Fashion plates colored and plain, a piece of music, excellent reading matter in prose and poetry household hints etc., are but a little of the good things among its contents. Published at 1224 Arch St., Phila.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

In *Cassell's Family Magazine* for August, Miss Alice O'Hanlon's capital story, A Diamond in the Rough, has reached its thirty-first chapter and goes on interestingly to the end. It is followed by a lively sketch, How we lived upon Wheels, a description of four vans that were rigged up by a husband and wife for a holiday trip. The first part of a descriptive article on, The Postmen of the World, by Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming, follows. The Family Doctor, who follows, advises training against troubles to come; Cumberland Statesmen, is the subject of a short essay; the subject of Gymnastics for Girls, is discussed, and there is another paper on London by Night. The strong points of, Some Great English Painters, are dwelt upon and illustrated, Sauces for Fish, Flesh, and Fowl, contains some excellent hints. The Scientific Circle, and, The Gatherer, keep us posted in all that is new in the way of useful inventions. Serials, short stories, poetry, pictures and music enliven the pages of this admirable magazine and makes it a welcome visitor. Cassell & Co., New York.

The Illustrated Magazine of Art for August contains thirty-five admirable illustrations, and papers as follows: "The Older London Churches, by W. J. Loftie; Old Herbals; German and Italian, by J. F. Paine, M. D.; The Dart, by J. A. Blaikie; The Story of a Block of Marble, by L. Scott; Glass Painting; the Beginning of the End, by L. F. Day; The Austrian Museums, by W. M. Conway; Some Modern Medallions; Current Art; Pierre Lescot, by Mary F. Robinson; The Chronicle of Art, and Art Notes. The frontispiece is, A New Song of Spring Gardens, by Austin Dobson and R. Caldecott, and there are full-page engravings after Gabriel Max, A. Hagborg, and Meissonier. Published by Messrs. Cassell & Co., New York.

A late issue of *The Christian Index*, of Atlanta Ga., speaking of the life of Col. John J. Howard one of the most eminent citizens of that State and refering to his early struggles to secure an education says: "He spared two dollars out of his meagre earnings, and with it he secured one year's subscription to THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, printed in Philadelphia. This literary paper opened up, so to speak, a new life to the mind of this eager youth and lifted his imagination and desires above and beyond the confines of his frugal mountain home. It gave him a glimpse of the busy, bustling world, for which his soul began to yearn, and his resolve was taken. He intended to know more of it." This was the begining of an honored career that has been attended with both credit and fortune.

The Sanatarian is the best magazine published in this country that makes a specialty of the general class of subjects included under this head. While it is sufficiently advanced to keep abreast of, or lead the best knowledge and opinion in matters of sanitation on a large or small scale, it also contains much that the non-specialist will find of high practical value. The July number contains a large number of articles all of which contain suggestive matter for reflection and behoof. Published at 113 Fulton St., New York.

The American nation has a double birthright—liberty and land. Its liberty it has guarded jealously, but until very recent years it seems to have been indifferent to the loss of its landed estate and ignorant of the methods by which it has been diminished. A veteran legislator, the Hon. George W. Julian, who has given special attention to acts disposing of our public lands, tells the story in brief in a contribution to the *North American Review* for August. In the same number five medical authorities discuss the question, "Can Cholera be Averted?" Felix L. Oswald contributes a suggestive article on, The Animal Soul; and the Rev. M. J. Savage, in A Profane View of the Sanctum, brings an indictment against the daily press. The other articles are on on, Temperance Reform Statistics, by Prof. W. J. Beecher, and the chapter of Comments, by various writers, on articles in previous numbers. Published at New York.

COLD feet—Two feet of snow.

Humorous.

DISPELLING SHADOWS.

It was night, and they sat in the parlor,
And the brilliant gaslight streaming o'er,
Cast many a dark, flitting shadow
On the rich, velvet-carpeted floor.

And she spoke in a voice touched with sadness
Of how each with some sad sorrow strives,
And how many fond hearts might be happy
But for shadows that haunted their lives.

Then he rose up. She was happy
Though neither had spoken a word—
Adolphus had turned off the gaslight,
And the shadows had all disappeared.

—S. T. OLEN.

Trade wind—A drummer's talk.

Fair subjects for discussion—Women.

Breeches of contract—Those that shrink.

How to cut a swell—Snub a dude or lance a boil.

Motto for bootblacks—After rain comes the shine.

"Permit me to introduce myself," as the knife said to the oyster.

"Soled again," remarked the cobbler, as he repaired an old pair of boots.

Why is a hog the brainiest animal? Because he has a hogshead of brains.

The skating rinks should make a deal of money. The patrons come down handsomely every night.

A cup of coffee will remove the odor of onions from the breath. Another way is to eat no onions.

Iron is "good for the blood." For instance, observe what good complexions the Chinese laundrymen have!

Stern parent: "Another bad report, my son!" "Yes, papa; you must really talk to my teacher, or he will keep on sending bad reports."

It takes eight hundred full blown roses to make a tablespoonful of perfume, whilst ten cents worth of onions will scent a whole neighborhood.

Friend—"You don't mean to say that you understand French?" Tommy—"Oh, yes, I do; for when pa and ma speak French at table I know I am to have a powder."

"Why are you so precise in your statement? Are you afraid of telling an untruth?" asked a lawyer of a witness in a police court. "No, sir!" was the prompt reply.

"What are you thinking about when you are not thinking about anything?" "In that case, I am thinking what answer to make to a man who does not ask me a question."

A Milwaukee man swallowed a trade dollar three weeks ago, and still has the coin in his stomach. It is pleasant to know that somebody has finally found a use for the trade dollar.

"I am growing up pretty fast, and soon I shall be raising a moustache," said Tommy Toddler. "You are mistaken, my boy. When you raise a moustache you'll be growing down."

An Arizona man has stopped taking an agricultural paper. He wrote to the editor, asking how to get rid of goats. The answer came in the next issue of the paper: "Kill them."

"No," said an old maid, "I don't miss a husband very much. I have trained my dog to growl every time I feed him, and I have bought a tailor's dummy that I can scold when I feel like it."

"Are they real cannibals?" inquired a countryman, as he gazed on the wonders of a Milwaukee dime museum—"real cannibals? Why, d'ye know wha. I'd do with 'em if this was my show?" "No; what?" "I'd starve 'em for three or four days, an' then turn 'em loose on the rest of the actors. I just saw the stage performance."

The Tortures of Neuralgia,

Are promptly relieved by Compound Oxygen, which acts directly on the great nerve centers. If you are a sufferer from this painful disease, write to Drs. Starkey and Palen, 1109 Girard street, Philadelphia, and ask them to send you such documents and testimonials in regard to this Vitalizing Treatment as will enable you to judge for yourself whether it promises to give relief in your case.

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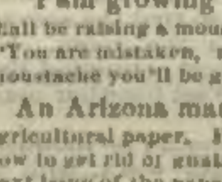

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3	Crying Colic, or Teething of Infants.	.25
4	Diarrhea of Children or Adults.....	.25
5	Dysentery, Griping, Bilious Colic....	.25
6	Cholera Morbus, Vomiting.....	.25
7	Coughs, Cold, Bronchitis.....	.25
8	Neuralgia, Toothache, Facache.....	.25
9	Headaches, Sick Headache, Vertigo..	.25

HOMEOPATHIC

10	Dyspepsia, Bilious Stomach.....	.25
11	Suppressed or Painful Periods.....	.25
12	Whites, too Profuse Periods.....	.25
13	Croup, Cough, Difficult Breathing....	.25
14	Salt Rheum, Erysipelas, Eruptions..	.25
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results from that true contentment which indicates perfect health of body and mind. You may possess it, if you will purify and invigorate your blood with Ayer's Sarsaparilla. E. M. Howard, Newport, N. H., writes: "I suffered for years with Scrofulous humors. After using two bottles of Ayer's Sarsaparilla, I

Found

great relief. It has entirely restored me to health." James French, Atchison, Kans., writes: "To all persons suffering from Liver Complaint, I would strongly recommend Ayer's Sarsaparilla. I was afflicted with a disease of the liver for nearly two years, when a friend advised me to take this medicine. It gave prompt relief, and has cured me." Mrs. H. M. Kidder, 41 Dwight st., Boston, Mass., writes: "For several years I have used Ayer's Sarsaparilla in my family. I never feel safe, even

At Home

without it. As a liver medicine and general purifier of the blood, it has no equal." Mrs. A. B. Allen, Winterpock, Va., writes: "My youngest child, two years of age, was taken with Bowel Complaint, which we could not cure. We tried many remedies, but he continued to grow worse, and finally became so reduced in flesh that we could only move him upon a pillow. It was suggested by one of the doctors that Scrofula might be the cause of the trouble. We procured a bottle of

AYER'S Sarsaparilla

and commenced giving it to him. It surely worked wonders, for, in a short time, he was completely cured."

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TO WEAK MEN suffering from nervous debility, weakness of body and mind, loss of memory, mental and physical exhaustion.—I will send you a valuable treatise upon the above diseases, also directions for home cure, free of charge. Address Prof. F. C. FOWLER, Moodus, Conn.

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A MAGNIFICENT LITHOGRAPHIC PICTURE OF

GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT.

An Unparalleled, Unique, Original and Beautiful Memento of the AMERICAN HERO, Known and Honored by all the Nations of the World.

There is not a home in this broad land where the name of ULYSSES S. GRANT is not known. His valiant services in the army so endeared him to the grateful hearts of the people that they twice, by overwhelming majorities, elected him President.

Now that he has passed away from earthly scenes and honor, what more fitting memento of this great man can be obtained than this

ARTISTIC MEMORIAL!

We have, therefore, published this beautiful picture. All its different features have been designed by the best artists; the excellent portrait is correct in its details, and is admitted by all to be a striking and lifelike likeness.

The picture proper is a grand combination, appropriately and aesthetically grouped together. Looking at the picture, at the top is the suggestive title,

WE MOURN OUR LOSS.

It would be impossible to obtain a more significant title than the one we have adopted. For there is no one, irrespective of party differences, but what freely gave forth their heartfelt sympathy during the last days of the life of this noble hero. Below the title, in a medallion, is a lifelike portrait of

GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT.

It was copied from a photograph recently taken. Great care and taste have been used to make this a correct likeness. On the right and left of the portrait are two beautifully designed banners, on which is emblazoned,

LIST OF BATTLES AND ROLL OF HONOR.

Below the portrait, enclosed in a pretty design, is the Letter of Capitulation which General Grant sent General Lee, at Appomattox Court House, Va., April 9th, 1865, and the reply of General Lee, with a fac-simile of both signatures. The table upon which this letter was written is also represented. Below, and to the right and left, is a fac-simile of

THE GRANT MEDAL.

In the space on the sides of the medal is a correct history of the

LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

of General Grant. This is not a common lithograph picture, but a genuine work of art, printed in tints, on heavy plate paper, 19x26.

AGENTS WANTED EVERYWHERE! A WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT.

We would only say that if you want to make money fast, you should embrace this opportunity and send for a sample picture at once, as the field is sure to be taken up with but little delay. From Maine to California there is the most intense desire to procure an authentic portrait of the Hero of America.

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Latest Fashion Phases.

In one way, all important as a prettily dressed head is at all times, a woman's coiffure needs to have greater care given it, needs to be more unexceptionable, in summer than during the winter. Hats are not always worn on going out of doors. At some of our watering-places a woman may dispense with wearing any such thing the entire season through if it pleases her, except for church, or to go out of a rainy day, and the light which beats upon an uncovered head on piazzas, lawns, etc., is more searching and of a more critical quality than that of a snug Winter interior.

A badly arranged head, a head with faulty contours, is so utterly subversive of a proper personal ensemble that it is only a wonder every woman does not make her coiffure almost her first and foremost consideration. This and the fit of her waist we should call the touchstones—the crucial tests—of her taste and her "tabe" in the matter of her dress. To some people a well-dressed head conveys at once and solely the idea of an elaborately dressed one. But this is a great delusion. The coiffures which have the simplest lines are invariably the most intrinsically beautiful. As who would not see that the Venus of Milo would scarcely be the Venus any longer if she had a voluminous structure of the chignon type upon her head, instead of her own exquisite, softly-waved, low-growing hair, twisted with a classic carelessness into just the right lines for her profile? Just now the fashions are such—for ordinary occasions at least; for full-dress, notably among older women, more intricate effects are beginning to be sought—that they favor this graceful simplicity of outline very greatly. There are no inducements to pile Ossa on Pelion on the head in the shape of braids, curls, knots, torsades. But on the other hand, there is danger of thinking that careless simplicity is the same thing as simplicity with care and art, artfully concealed. Every one who does her hair up in a double loop on the crown of her head, and crimps her part-locks, though she is conforming to the prevailing fashions, has not by any means always solved the problem of the greatest becomingness and the greatest beauty for her own particular individual case.

There are bow-knots and bow-knots, curls and curls. There have probably never been greater facilities for women, one and all, to "get up" pretty heads than now. Those whose own hair is thin, or lustreless, or greasy, or badly "planted," or in any other way unattractive, have no excuse for not disguising the fact. False hair has been brought to such a degree of perfection, such as is now made is of such greatly improved quality and is prepared and put together in such a consummately artistic manner, that it can defy detection altogether and pass for the natural hair; and as far less of it is required than in years gone by, when top and heavy coiffures were in vogue, the greatest objections which the most squeamish could make to it are now removed. Surely, if Providence has bestowed a fine suit of hair upon a woman, she is very silly to have recourse to anything false. But equally silly is that sister of hers, not thus endowed, who does not take advantage of that which art devises for the purpose of supplementing defective nature.

There are no end of women who are now putting up their front hair in pins and papers to produce curls and waves which never have the right look anyway, who would do much better to give those poor, tortured, thinned-out locks a rest, and put on a front piece which, without looking "wiggy" or false, would have just the appearance they have been despairingly aiming at, and all in vain. These front coiffures, as now made, a soft mass of fluffy ring curls, cover the head quite far back. The back hair is carried up over them, and there twisted into two large figure eights, or love knots.

There is no deviation from the high coiffure, though in Paris the "catogan," or twist of the hair falling on the nape of the neck, grows constantly more in favor. Not that it has yet taken the place of the high style, however. A sort of compromise between the two extremes is found in a coiffure which is quite new, consisting of one large, heavy, rather loose braid commencing from the top of the head, well back (the hair having previously been combed up and tied), and falling to a little below the neck and then carried up again, a small fancy comb or a few tortoise-shell pins forming a finish there.

The front hair is parted and drawn back in soft waves and a few short curls fall on the forehead. This is an excellent coiffure for any one having a very heavy suit of hair which is difficult to dispose of in the compact high coiffure of the day, following closely, as it does, the outlines of the head and rejecting any bulky effect.

The assortment of ornaments, such as combs, ball-headed pins, either of plain tortoise shell, silver or gold plated, enameled, studded with Rhine stones, etc., at present to be seen in any hair dressing establishment, is needless.

In Paris, young girls are beginning to wear ribbons again either in full rosette-like knot with the high coiffure—the knot set far forward toward the left—or in a big bow to tie the "catogan," or in quite a flowing knot on the top of the head, in addition to the latter. This last style, with, sometimes, a band of ribbon carried, encircling the head, from the bow on the top to the bow on the "catogan," is of the newest for young girls' full dress, and, doubtless, will be considerably in vogue among Parisian debutantes next Winter, just as it has been among the Parisian "jeunes filles" this past season. It was indeed, already adopted last Winter by one young creature whose "coming out" dress of white tulle, with white rose petals sown all over the skirts, was supplemented with white ribbons and a white faille low-necked bodice—a most charming toilet, by the way—and the white ribbons against her dark hair had a most youthful and original and pleasing effect. As to the hair, one more suggestion. It is well to change the manner of arranging with some frequency. Not only this is the conducive to the healthfulness of the scalp—just as the hair should be brushed and combed at night in a direction contrary to that in which it is worn during the day but a better result, in the dressing itself is obtained. Worn continuously in one way, the hair takes all manner of "kinks"—becomes utterly unmanageable. Or, if you escape that Scylla, you are utterly wrecked on another Charybdis, for insensibly, the effects, the contours are exaggerated in the long run. The eye, from prolonged custom, loses its sense of proportion, and to produce what it thinks the right look everything has to be emphasized. One girl discovers that a full, broad, fluffy, Pompadour effect to her front hair suits her face, and she goes on gradually broadening and adding to the volume of curls—combined them out more and more, till, all unknown, to herself, she ends by having a perfect bird's nest on the top of her head. The effect is not in the smallest degree what she originally proposed. It is like rouging and using perfumes. The sense becomes blunted after a time. A woman adds and adds; there is no end to it.

Green, as we have already remarked, and as every one must see for himself, is a dangerous color to have growing very fashionable, because in its lighter and more decided tones it is so very trying. But we shall have to practice resignation, for fashionable—and very fashionable—these trying greens will certainly be before very long, if they are not so already. In Paris it is an accomplished fact. But the green of greens there, most fortunately, is of a very tender, delicate hue, which can only be used for accessories—bonnets, knots of ribbon, corsets etc., therefore not unduly prominent. In millinery it is chiefly to the fore and then very often combined with pale pink. Some women who have a leaning towards the eccentric have begun to wear green tulle veils, it appears, as an appendage to the green bonnets, with what effect upon the complexion is not stated, but, haply, left to the imagination to conceive.

One new green toilet, the shade known as "Chartreuse," has a skirt of French faille laid on broad, hollow plaits, and the overdress of a lacy, transparent wool tissue forming a sort of double washerwoman drapery in front, the folds taking a rather diagonal direction and a high "pouf" behind. The waist is round, gathered slightly, and there is a very broad moire sash which falls in long ends on the left side. Other new dresses prepared for the races in Paris we transcribe: A costume of etamine, claret colored and checked foulard, pink, red and white; gathered skirt of etamine and round waist of the same; bretelles of foulard drawn in at the waist, drapery of the checked and plain goods mixed. A suit of rich green delaine; round full skirt with ruffles at the foot; Russian chemisette, with gold galloon; jacket flowing open from the neck. Dress of checked blue and gray wool goods, skirt alternately of broad plaits of the same and fan-shaped insertings of blue faille; high pouf, lined with silk, taken up in the back; bodice of the check, with bouffant plastron of silk and straps of velvet taken across. Hats, gray straw, blue velvet trimming, knots in front and a number of blue bird's heads among the latter.

Costumes of cream white etamine to be worn at watering places, etc.: Box-pleated skirt; long pointed arrow turned up on the left side with a broad revers of sapphire blue velvet; bodice pointed, outlined by a bias of blue velvet two inches wide; same bands carried up to the throat on both sides of a gathered plastron of cream-colored, lace-figured net; velvet collar; sleeves stopping midway between elbow and waist, with drapery of velvet and shell of figured net; three rows of blue velvet-ribbon, two inches wide, on the foot of the skirt the ultra-fashionable hats and clothes have become so monstrous in point of height that a tacit protest against them has set in among woman of taste. The best dressed and the most lady-like of our fashionables have quite refused to follow this exaggerated style, which is rendered all the more flaring by the nature of the ornaments employed, with the qualities of tinsel, their galloons, their tadpoles, lizards or butterflies set in the midst of great nosegays of green grasses and loud-looking flowers.

Domestic Economy.

KNICK-KNACKS.

Little odds and ends scattered about a room aid very materially to its beauty, sometimes to its comfort. I saw a charming pincushion the other day, hung against the wall in a very pretty drawing-room. It was made of crimson silk, and was suspended from the nail by a broad crimson ribbon. It was about six inches long, and quite two in thickness, being well stuffed. On the front of the silk was sewn the brass ornament that is seen on the front head-band of a cart-horse. The effect was charming, so quaint and original. The pins were placed in and out of the brass work, thus defining the pattern.

There is a rage for these pincushions, and soon these brass ornaments will go up immensely in value; so, ladies, buy while they are still reasonable.

Charming paper-knives are of olive wood, painted with a flight of swallows, beginning with a large one, and ending with one so small that it is no bigger than a speck.

Sometimes, in old curiosity shops, Battersea enamel boxes are to be picked up for a trifle, for the reason that they are minus the lid, and salt-cellars of the same lovely enamel, are also to be discovered "sans feet." Both of these make excellent pincushions stuffed with dark red, sapphire, dahlia, or myrtle green velvet or satin. They look well in any drawing-room.

If you possess any old Delft tiles, they can be easily made either into five o'clock tea-tables, jardinieres, square tea-trays, or single flower-pots. For the five o'clock tea-tables, they require to be set in a frame of wood, ebonised; in shape, they may be round or oval, and they should consist of two tiers, the bottom for the cake, bread and butter, etc., the top for the tea-pot, cups and saucers, etc., and the top tray should have two brass handles, so that the servant can easily carry it into the room. For flower-pots, the tiles are best connected by a piece of electro-plate; five set together make a good shape.

For jardinieres, they should be mounted in gold or silver basket work, with an inside tin, which takes in and out, and can be washed, for the flower-pots to stand in; or the stands look well in wood, painted with plain vermilion, blue or white enamel paint. For tea-trays, they should have a stand up border all round, about one and a half inch high, of plain electro-plate, this always looks well, also it lasts, and is in keeping with the tiles.

Tiles may also be let into small cupboards, to hang on the wall with shelves above, into the front of brass and wooden coal-scuttles, and the two ends of book slides. They are useful and ornamental in a variety of different ways; they are inexpensive, except the very old ones.

Very pretty eggs were bought for Easter, some of the prettiest were of wood, pink and blue, red and blue, etc. They may be now utilised as follows: Get two small gilt tripods made, put the half of the egg into each, place in it one of the small miniature ferns, and you have a charming flower-pot. Put wet moss to hide the earth, and by so doing, and constantly renewing the moss, you will keep your ferns green for months.

A useful pen-wiper may be made as follows: Take any small pieces of silk, satin, cloth, tweed, of dark colors, such as are useless for any other purpose, being much too small in size. Sew them together firmly in the centre, to hide the stitches use a large button in gold or silver, or colored silk. Notch the edges all round, to make it look neat. These pen-wipers stand a great deal of wear; and being so simple, people can afford to throw them away when they are done with.

Very nice music portfolios may be made by anyone possessed of a little artistic taste. Two pieces of cardboard are taken of the required size; these are covered with plain satin, pink or pale blue is the prettiest though cream and red always look well. Double or treble sets of strings of satin ribbon are sewn to the sides, and a gold or silver cord is sewn on all round to make the edges tidy.

On the front side, paint in oil colors, or pale blue, a spray of lilac, with a couple of brown butterflies just alighting on the flowers; on the pink, white and yellow marguerite daisies, with large brown bees drinking the fragrance of the flowers; on the cream, a spray of passion flowers of all shades, with a brown trellis work as a background, over which the flowers seem growing; and on the red, stephanotis and forget-me-nots, with a goldfinch perched on the stephanotis.

Confidential Correspondents.

POSTED.—The goods of a sub-tenant are liable to distress on the premises for the rent of the original tenant.

BLACKA.—"Pall Mall!" is pronounced as if spelled "Pell Mell," with a slight accent on the second syllable.

MANCH.—The best thing to make hair grow on the face is, without doubt, "age." When age does not accomplish this, we doubt whether anything will effectually.

CHESS.—For every pawn which you have advanced to the opposite end of the board, you can demand a queen, or any other piece which the state of your game may require.

POTTS.—You would not be liable to punishment for carrying a revolver in your pocket from the store where it was purchased to your home. It would be lawful to carry it openly in your hand.

GREENY.—In showing anyone into a room you need say nothing until you are both inside, when you may request him or her to take a seat, either by gesture, or by some such formula as "Pray be seated."

A. Y.—Why do you want to insert in the newspapers another notice of your husband's death when the anniversary of the event comes round? Such a thing would be quite unusual, and could serve no useful or creditable purpose.

INQUIRER.—Natural sciences are those which deal with the various phenomena of natural or material bodies; the phrase, in fact, includes every sphere of inquiry, except the mental and moral faculties of man, and their manifestations in language and history.

H. T. H.—The young of the oyster is nurtured in the shell, and not on the outside, as commonly supposed, the little creatures that first issue from the shell having projections on each side like the wings of butterflies, with which they flutter about in the water; but in a short time the wings drop off and the shell begins to be secreted.

D. L.—In many cases, character may be roughly inferred from handwriting, but the rule has too many exceptions to be of much value. Where people pay no attention to their writing, the indications are fairly trustworthy; but in the many cases in which a certain style of calligraphy is aimed at, the chances are that they would only lead one astray.

FERNWOOD.—It is impossible to say whether King Lear is an entirely mythical personage. The tragical story of his woes is recorded by Geoffrey of Monmouth, who flourished at the Court of Henry I., in the eleventh century, and, under the patronage of Queen Maud, gathered up into his so-called "History of the Britons" the "Dreams of Arthur," so long cherished by the Celts of Brittany.

VICTOR.—When a young lady pointedly and unmistakably shows a young gentleman that she has changed her mind with regard to him, his own pride ought to prevent him from paying her any further attentions. Moreover, if her conduct be the result of mere caprice or coquetry, he may consider himself fortunate in escaping a match with such a young lady.

BARK.—You confess that it is entirely through your own fault you have lost your suitors at different times, because you are a flirt and a coquette; and you inquire what you are now to do? We can only advise you to become as steady as possible, and strive your best to redeem your character from the imputations of giddiness, fickleness, and levity, which always attach themselves to young females who flirt.

ALBERT.—We regret not to be able to help you. Many kinds of cloth wear "greasy," and we fear you can do nothing to remove the gloss from your coat. One that has become shiny from hard wear may be improved by sponging it with liquid ammonia and water. Cold clear coffee is also a good thing, but the uniform gloss you dislike is no doubt due to some of the ingredients used in the dyeing. You have our hearty thanks for your very kind letter.

F. & I.—You ask if in the course of a general conversation between a lady and gentlemen—intimate friends—the gentlemen wishing to illustrate a point and not thinking of, or caring to mention names should say: "I once called on a certain lady at a certain place;" whether there is anything improper in the speech. Nothing whatever. It is a form of expression used every day in the best society. It can be made to seem offensive, and if a hearer wished—like the woman who looked for the bad words in Dr. Johnson's Dictionary—to misconstrue the phrase it might very easily be done. But, in itself, nothing could be more direct, simple or proper.

SEVENTEEN.—Prudence and caution ought to be exercised by a lady when she has accepted the addresses of a gentleman, and an agreement has been entered into betwixt them. Her principles and her judgment will be frequently tested. At the commencement of youthful love, there is often a strong propensity to overstep the limits of prudence and to rush into excess. Such conduct must be carefully refrained from on the lady's part. She must ever avoid too much familiarity; for love, like other passions, has its bound; and being too familiar with your lover will lower you perhaps in his estimation; yet if not in his, will have that effect on the minds of other persons.

OMEGA.—Handshaking pretty much depends upon the person with whom you are shaking hands; for instance, you shake hands with a lady comparatively a stranger—it would be ill-bred to too firmly grasp her hand and then give three hearty shakes, as though handling a pump handle. So take her hand fairly in your own, and gently raise the arm slightly up and down twice. With a lady very intimate, the same should be followed, with a little more freedom. Shaking hands with a gentleman—a stranger—could be followed as the lady of intimate acquaintance; but a very old friend, or intimate friend, three or four good hearty shakes, with a firm grip. Very often people shake hands as though touching something of an infectious nature; a luke-warm hand is placed in your own, the arm hardly raised, and then, after one or two faint tries of a shake, drops. Nothing is more tantalizing to one's feelings especially if an old acquaintance. Too much boldness in handshaking is vulgar, such as keeping hold of the hand and giving perhaps six or more shakes. The hands remaining locked, as you may call it, 'after the shake,' for a second or two, is not at all a breach of etiquette, so long as the pressure is not too much. Of course we are not speaking of engaged couples, or those who are likely to be engaged.